GURPS® Fourth Edition

Boardroom and Curia™

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Introduction

Adventurers tend to be remarkable, those one-in-a-million, uniquely capable people who can face destiny singlehanded. For everyone else, there's strength in numbers. That can be a problem for the rare standout individuals – many hands can make light work, or *quick* work of lone wolves and small adventuring parties. Coordinated groups can pose significant challenges in adventures: the heroes may need to sneak past a tribe of cannibals, counteract the agents of a shadowy spy network, or prevail against the resources of a massive corporation. On the other hand, an organization can be a source of power for the PCs, providing them with money, equipment, expert advice, and legal and moral support. Regardless of the setting, adventurers will eventually face an organized group of people, and then it's useful to have an idea of the organization's capabilities, from its material assets to its structural limitations.

GURPS Boardroom and Curia provides a framework for describing everything from bands of street thugs to multinational corporations. It isn't a comprehensive construction set (like the ***GURPS Basic Set*** is for individuals), although there are guidelines for starting and modifying an organization, nor does it contain a comprehensive system for managing day-to-day operations and resolving conflicts, though it does outline a number of significant actions that someone in charge can take. What it *does* provide is a format for expressing those aspects of organizations most relevant to PCs who encounter them. Thus, many of the statistics deal not with the group *in toto,* but rather with its functional capabilities – above and beyond its core functions – that it can practically bring to bear against or in favor of adventurers.

There go the people. I must follow them, for I am their leader.

– Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin (attributed)

About *GURPS*

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all ***GURPS*** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

Publication History

This is the first edition of ***GURPS Boardroom and Curia.*** The Medici bank and its context are discussed in another of Matt Riggsby's publications, ***GURPS Hot Spots: Renaissance Florence.*** Biotech Euphrates was first described in ***Transhuman Space,*** by David Pulver, and turns up in several books supporting that setting. The Raiders of the Black Void are loosely affiliated with the Cabal, which is featured in ***GURPS Infinite Worlds,*** by Kenneth Hite, Steve Jackson, and John M. Ford. A number of rules used here – notably those for loyalty checks – appear in a slightly different form in ***GURPS Social Engineering,*** by William H. Stoddard.

About the Author

Matt Riggsby acquired qualifying credentials from different universities studying how societies assemble themselves, and has worked for a number of corporations operating under a few different governmental regimes. He associates with a wife who keeps things in order, a disruptive son, and several dogs who are in complete chaos.

Chapter One
Organization Stats

An organization's statistics summarize its inclinations and capabilities. A stat block may represent an entire organization (for example, a company or a criminal gang) or a distinct part of a larger one (such as a bank's local branch office, a single government agency, or an individual church that's part of a larger organized religion). Many of an organization's characteristics can be described using a mix of statistics similar to those of societies (e.g., TL and CR), cities (like number of members and income levels), and individual characters (Contacts, Allies, Patrons, and so on). While reading about these, refer to *The Chicago Outfit* (p. 5) for a sample stat block.

Using Points

Where an organization's traits correspond closely to those of characters – indicated by a * next to the title of the section discussing the relevant statistic – their point values are recorded. This *does not* mean that character points are used to build organizations, as they are for characters! An organization is not generated using a pool of points and does not acquire points through adventuring with which it may improve its stats, nor may its members spend earned character points to enhance its capabilities. However, because more-capable groups require more-specialized resources and personnel, points *are* used as one component in calculating the monetary cost to create an organization (see *Startup Cost,* p. 10).

Organization Name

Most organizations have at least one official name (the British East India Company, the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) and may also have nicknames (John Company, Nazis). A few have *only* unofficial names, created by outsiders. Members might talk about themselves in vague, unnamed terms ("this thing we do") and have names imposed by others ("the Mafia").

Mission Statement

This is a description of the organization's function, goal, or mission, indicating *what it does* and *how it does that* – possibly including summaries of both the group's main activities and how it operates internally. Mission Statement should emphasize how the organization actually works rather than how it represents itself to the outside world. For example, the Mission Statement of the Unified Widget Corporation might be:

> UWC dominates the mass market by producing large volumes of inexpensive, if not particularly high quality, widgets for the home and low-end commercial markets. UWC's leadership is largely in the hands of the feuding Widgie sisters, who between them own over 90% of the company, but minority stockholders often act as tiebreakers.

Capabilities

These stats reflect fundamental aspects of what an organization can do.

TL (Tech Level)

This is typically the tech level of the society in which the organization operates – but not always! For example, a secret alien conspiracy operating on modern-day Earth might be TL9 or more instead of TL8. Organizations are sparse at TL0; most are bands or small tribes (see ***GURPS Low-Tech Companion 1: Philosophers and Kings*** for more detail), though these might contain groups such as religious brotherhoods. Split, divergent, and superscience TLs (pp. B511-513) should be indicated here, but the details belong in the Notes.

Members

This is the number of active members of the organization. It includes anyone who materially contributes to the group's activities through something other than occasional payments in money or in kind. This comprises all employees, slaves, draftees, volunteers, sworn devotees, and actively involved owners. Distinctions between such categories can be indicated in the Notes (along with racial, species, or other distinctions), but the total headcount belongs here.

The number of members generally *does not* include clients, renters and sharecroppers, customers, investors, and others who benefit from or contribute to the organization but don't participate in its activities. For example, it would include workers and executives at a charity, but not people who only donate money or those who only receive aid. Spirits that can possess more than one body, AIs that control many robots, and so on can pose a challenge – but in general, each *independently thinking entity* counts as one member, with the ability to have multiple physical manifestations implying that the organization has superior physical resources and therefore higher Wealth (pp. 5-6).

Wealth

Wealth indicates, in a general way, the amount of resources an organization can bring to bear relative to its size. This statistic uses the same levels as the Wealth advantage (p. B25). Most groups have Wealth in the Struggling to Comfortable range.

In addition to being a major factor in an organization's Resource Value (p. 10), Wealth is a general indicator of the size and quality of facilities and equipment used for everyday operations:

Poor: The organization has minimal equipment, and what it has is outdated or cobbled together from mismatched parts, frequently secondhand, and possibly improvised (p. B345). Supplies are scant. Facilities, if any, are used only on the sufferance of the property's owner (for example, the organization may have the use of an upstairs room at a bar, or somebody's cousin's garage), and access can be lost if the arrangement becomes inconvenient. Long-distance communication (postage, phone calls, etc.) and official travel are strictly limited due to their cost, and may require personal hardship or expense by the members undertaking it.

Struggling: The organization has distinctly second-rate equipment and facilities. Any spaces it occupies are slightly shabby, in need of fundamental repairs, and/or in a bad part of town; any security is provided by lock and key. Equipment is likely to be cheap and/or outdated (for example, pen and paper in the typewriter era, or electric typewriters in the early days of business computing). Long-distance communication goes by the slowest and cheapest channels. Official travel is rare.

Average: The organization's facilities are unremarkable, though severe damage may be slow to be repaired. Equipment is typical for its activities, and repaired by professional technicians (if any are available in the setting) where feasible, replaced if need be. Travel and transportation costs are monitored but aren't necessarily matters of great concern.

Comfortable: The organization's facilities are nicely appointed though not luxurious, or are in a modestly well-off area. Equipment is kept up to date and in good repair, and is quickly replaced if damaged. Security is improved for the organization's most important assets (for example, high-quality strongboxes or a night watchman for a low-tech moneylender, or video surveillance for a TL7 office). Communications costs are of little or no concern, and official travel is undertaken regularly, possibly in vehicles the organization owns.

Wealthy: The organization's facilities are notably attractive and often very well situated, with immediate access to raw materials, transport networks, political or business contacts, and so on. Equipment is at least recent and in near-pristine condition, and sometimes of good quality. Security is comprehensive (at least one of fortified buildings, shifts of watchmen, all-over video surveillance, biometric sensors, etc.). The organization owns several vehicles for official travel, or has arrangements with transportation services giving them preferred treatment.

Very Wealthy: The organization's facilities are lavishly decorated and as conveniently located as its mission requires (for example, a political lobbying firm may have a building next to the nation's legislature). Equipment is brand-new and at least good quality, and the best gear available at the TL is sometimes used. The organization has access to several *luxurious* vehicles for official travel, and its facilities may enjoy both high security and extensive disaster preparedness, such as backup power supplies and well-appointed fallout shelters.

The Chicago Outfit

Mission Statement: The Chicago Outfit makes money in 1930s Chicago by selling alcohol, smuggled into the United States or produced locally. It dabbles in other contraband, but mostly avoids narcotics and violent theft. Under the flamboyant leadership of Al Capone, the organization controls members and local government by appealing to a combination of greed and fear.

Capabilities

TL: 6 **Members:** 1,000

Wealth: Comfortable

Contacts: Criminal skills-18 [15]

Member Traits: Legal Immunity (12 or less, -34%; Against local law-enforcement only, -34%) [6]

Notable Resources: The Outfit owns no facilities in its own name, but it does operate and take the bulk of the profits from dozens of saloons and similar establishments which are nominally owned by members.

Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $46,080,000 **Resource Value:** $230,400

Patron Value: 15 points **Enemy Value:** -30 points

Ally and Dependent Value: The Outfit can supply 0- to 50-point thugs as Dependents or members of groups of Allies, or somewhat more powerful capos as individual Allies.

Social Attributes

Type: Criminal

CR: 3 **Loyalty:** Poor (9; +0)

Rank: Organized Crime Rank 0-5 [2/level]

Income Range: $1,600 (Average) to $8,000,000 (Multimillionaire 2)

Reputation: -3 (criminal organization, among law-enforcement agencies and law-abiding civilians)

Notes

Although the Chicago Outfit exercises little day-to-day control over the lives of its members, giving it a low CR, the consequences of disloyalty can be lethal. It is slightly unusual in that it is *not* notably racially intolerant, willing to deal with people of any ethnicity so long as there's money to be made.

Filthy Rich: The organization's facilities are decorated with historically or culturally significant artwork, or themselves approach landmark status. Equipment is cutting-edge. The organization may have extraordinary facilities for travel, such as its own landing strip or spaceport, and comfortable on-site accommodations for official travelers.

Exceptionally wealthy organizations may even have some level of Multimillionaire, though that approaches the cinematic. Their equipment isn't visibly better than that described for Filthy Rich (it can't be – Filthy Rich groups already have the best available!), but they have more spare cash to throw at problems.

Organizations may not be Dead Broke, however. Those that have no official assets and must fall back on whatever personal resources its members choose to use effectively have a Wealth level which depends on that of the membership. For example, a cabal of conspiring financiers may not maintain meeting rooms, staff, or a security system, but it can prevail upon individual members to store sensitive documents in their own personal safes, rotate meetings among their luxurious personal homes, and so on.

An organization may do better on some of the attributes described above *if* that's a trait typical of that sort of organization or the environment in which it operates. For example, a taxi company necessarily has a fleet of vehicles at its disposal no matter how much of a shoestring operation it may be, while a poorly funded modern charity hospital has at least some backup power generation to support equipment for critically ill patients. For large organizations, the quality of facilities may also differ between sites; e.g., the owner of a string of sweatshops might have a palatial office while his factories are crumbling.

If they can't straighten it, they know a cat that knows a cat that's gonna get it straight.

– Lord Buckley, "The Nazz"

*Contacts**

The types of Contacts and Contact Groups the organization offers, with point costs. Organizations may provide both *categories* of skills in the manner of Contact Groups and *individual* skills as Contacts would; e.g., a police force with a particularly good lab might have police skills at 15 but Forensics at 18. Most organizations provide a Contact Group "skill" appropriate to their mission: business skills for a corporation, military skills for a mercenary unit, religious skills for a church, and so on. Use the base cost of the Contact or Contact Group, unmodified for reliability or other factors, when recording point values. These skill levels are also used as an overall indicator of competence; see *Facing an Organization* (pp. 15-17).

*Member Traits**

An organization may have a number of less-common traits. Many of these might be possessed by all (or nearly all) of its members; e.g., most people on a police force are likely to have Legal Enforcement Powers. However, they might instead emerge from the group's structure and the interactions of its members. For example, individual members may be open to new ideas, but organizational culture and procedures could render the organization as a whole resistant to change and innovation.

Traits which count as requirements for membership belong here. These might include both advantages (for example, Wealth or Status to join an exclusive private club) and disadvantages (e.g., Social Stigma indicating membership in a disadvantaged group in order to join a related Fraternal organization). Widely used skills, such as a minimum craft skill level in order to join a professional guild, should be included under Contacts.

It's often the case that some but not all members of an organization have access to a given trait. For example, a Christian monastery clearly includes people with Clerical Investment, but only a few members of the community actually have it; indeed, when a group of monks is encountered, there's a good chance *none* of them will have it. To reflect a trait's scarcity within an organization, apply a frequency modifier to its cost to reflect how often it is found among a randomly encountered group of members: -34% for a roll of 12 or less on 3d, -50% for a roll of 9 or less, or -67% for a roll of 6 or less. This doesn't necessarily affect the group's value as a Patron or an Enemy, or in any other capacity. Organizations can deploy their resources as appropriate, given time to prepare, but often have gaps in coverage if caught unaware.

The creative GM may find uses for other traits not listed here. For example, an evil overlord's government might have Lifebane. It isn't just the dark lord or his important servants who have the disadvantage (although they may very well have it individually); plants and small animals die around the overlord's buildings and manufactured goods, too, even if nobody is using them.

Rare organizations may also make more-or-less *physical* traits available to their members; e.g., Energy Reserve might represent a common "power battery" for a mystical brotherhood who draw power from the same source. Most possibilities require expensive supernatural or technological intervention (cybernetic implants, magically grafted limbs, and so on), though a few may be provided more naturally. For example, a fanatical religious sect might give all its members a distinctive brand on the forehead, which would count as Distinctive Features.

As some of these traits may be aspects of the collective rather than of individual members, or reflect unusual characteristics of the organization, they need special handling.

Alternate Identity

see p. B39

Generally, only governmental agencies can offer legal Alternate Identities, though organizations with special relationships to the government might be allowed to do so. Most other Alternate Identities are illegal. Indeed, even renegade or exceptionally secret organizations nominally affiliated with government-backed groups may provide illegal ones, with the understanding that agents with such identities won't compromise their agencies if apprehended.

Blessed

see pp. B40-41

Members of a blessed organization often benefit from this advantage only when working on behalf of that group. For example, a knight of a Military, Religious order might enjoy Heroic Feats when fighting at the command of his superiors, but not when arm-wrestling at a tavern afterward or moving furniture around his house. Characters with a Duty to such an organization may represent this restriction by buying Blessed with a limitation worth -(25 + point value of Duty)%.

Though Blessed is most often associated with Religious organizations, non-Religious ones in some settings may have a blessing placed upon them by higher powers who find them useful. For example, a purely secular patriotic group might find itself blessed by their nation's patron saint, while a particularly vicious cabal of criminals may enjoy the blessing of a demonic entity working behind the scenes.

In all cases, the blessing's benefits are lost to members who don't act in accordance with the organization's rules and values.

Claim to Hospitality

see pp. B41-42

In low-tech societies, this advantage usually represents mutual recognition among members of a clan, religion, or ethnic group who shelter one another in distant lands – or obligations of underlings to powerful members of society (and, by extension, to agents of the powerful). In more modern settings, this could represent travel expense accounts and possibly even corporate apartments, allowing executives and other preferred employees to travel on their company's behalf without incurring additional personal expenses (such personnel may have a reciprocal obligation to act as hosts for other important travelers, taking them out for dinners and overseeing their accommodations).

Clerical Investment

see p. B43

Typically, only Religious organizations can offer this to their members. Not everyone in such a group need have Clerical Investment, however. Churches, temples, and monasteries often employ laymen to handle tasks too profane for the priesthood. And while low-ranking members (e.g., most Christian monks and the lowest-ranking church officials in Orthodox Christianity) might have Disciplines of Faith and even Social Regard for their religious avocation, they may not technically be clergy.

Divine Curse

see p. B132

Some organizations can be cursed; all members suffer from the disadvantage. Conditions for lifting the curse should be long-term organizational goals, such as rebuilding a destroyed temple or spreading a religion across an entire country.

Duty

see pp. B133-134

Duty may apply broadly to members of an organization, notably a Military one. In many cases, this is a prerequisite for significant benefits. The ***Basic Set*** notes rank- and privilege-related advantages, but almost any advantage the organization grants can fall into this category, including specialized training, improved equipment, and preferred access to the organization as a Patron.

Enemies

see p. B135

Entire groups can be devoted to one another's destruction, which makes individual members targets, but it's usually too impersonal a relationship to rise to the level of the Enemy disadvantage. Rank-and-file members of an organization often have little to fear; SMERSH doesn't place a high priority on killing stenographers in Langley. However, leaders and notable operatives may need to take their organization's enemies as their own.

Talents and Powers

Though organizations might include many members with Talents (reflecting, for example, special training or selection for individuals with particular abilities), those capabilities are better represented by Contact Group skills with similar coverage. For example, if a group employs a large number of people with Artificer, reflect that with a high "technical skills" Contact trait.

Powers are an exception, however. If members of a group partake of common supernatural, superscience, or other extraordinary abilities best represented as powers, those may be represented under Member Traits as suitable advantages *and* Talents. Having abilities granted by an organization is a suitable use of the Pact limitation (p. B113).

Gadgeteer

see pp. B56-57

The organization possesses sufficient intellectual resources to research and develop novel inventions. Though small groups may employ individual gadgeteers, larger ones gain this advantage by virtue of having a staff of research scientists whose joint efforts lead to new technologies. An organization with Gadgeteer should also act as a Contact for at least one scientific or engineering skill.

Hidebound

see p. B138

The organization's internal culture is slow to react and resistant to change. In addition to giving -2 to any organizational work requiring creativity, rolls by characters to get the organization to do something by going through channels (***GURPS Social Engineering,*** p. 48) are at +2, while questionable requests are at -2.

High TL

see p. B23

The organization has access to above-average technological knowledge: memoirs of a time traveler, stranded alien prisoners, a mad genius scribbling notes in the basement, or similar.

It *does not* have high-TL equipment, but this trait enables it to offer higher-TL skills as Contact skills. As a +300% enhancement, the organization may possess both high-TL skills *and* a regular supply of high-TL gear.

Higher Purpose

see p. B59

Like Blessed, Higher Purpose may be a trait of an organization as a whole. The advantage's bonus applies only to actions undertaken by members acting in an official capacity, and is lost if they cease to be members.

Intolerance

see p. B140

Whatever the inclination of individual members, organizational policy is intolerant. Members of the group(s) the organization is prejudiced against are subject to reaction penalties. This frequently takes the form of refusing service or segregating customers; for example, many hotels and restaurants in the pre-Civil Rights era United States served only white or only black customers, while theaters and public transportation might reserve different sections for whites and blacks.

Self-Imposed Mental Disadvantages

Certain disadvantages (see p. B121) reflect a personal attitude that cannot – mind control aside – be imposed from outside. A group may attempt to select or indoctrinate members with such traits, but it can't rule out skilled fakers or those sufficiently weak-willed that, when push comes to shove, they'll fail to live up to the desired standards. Consequently, while self-imposed mental disadvantages may be common within an organization, they're poor choices for universal traits. For example, one might volunteer for the military for the veterans' benefits rather than out of a Sense of Duty. Indicate such traits in the Notes. Organizational standards of behavior are best represented with Duty – or, in extreme cases, a Pact limitation (p. B113) on other traits.

Legal Enforcement Powers

see p. B65

In the modern era, this advantage is typically granted only by governmental agencies. However, it might be given to members of other groups under limited circumstances (for example, to private organizations contracted to handle law-enforcement tasks).

Legal Immunity

see p. B65

Like Legal Enforcement Powers, this is usually but not always a government-related trait. It is more often applied to individuals than to an organization as a whole. But there are, for example, traditions of inviolability for holy persons; e.g., during the Middle Ages, Catholic clergy were subject to canon (church-run) courts rather than secular ones.

License and Permit

see *GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*, p. 18

Just as characters are assumed to have whatever licenses are legally required to practice their skills, legitimate organizations are assumed to have any legal permissions needed to perform their usual activities. However, some groups have the power to *grant* licenses and permits. This is usually worth 1 point if it involves issuing licenses (e.g., driver's or pilot's licenses, or permission to practice law or medicine), or 2 points for permits to use items beyond the CR of the society in which the organization operates (*not* the organization's CR).

Mana Enhancer

see p. B68

An organization might, for supernatural reasons, grant its members a magical aura which allows them to cast spells even in no-mana areas. However, this trait is more common in a variant form that increases *sanctity* rather than mana, reflecting a Religious organization's capacity to establish sacred areas. It may also be taken with a special limitation: Facilities Only, -25%. With this modifier, sanctity enhancement applies to suitably consecrated buildings and grounds, but not to members of the organization.

Methodical

see *GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks*, p. 19

Organizations may take this as a "leveled" quirk, reflecting an organizational culture that reacts slowly but with considerable care and planning to ensure skilled execution. This is suitable for elven councils, vampire courts, advanced alien advisory boards, and other nigh-immortal groups who can take as much time as they like to decide what to do. Reaction time increases, but the organization also gains a bonus on any related skill rolls. Each level of Methodical (maximum five levels) gives +2 to Reaction-Time Modifier (pp. 9-10) but +1 to effective skill when carrying out the request.

Organizations may also take a "Rash" quirk – the inverse of Methodical, suitable for impulsive or otherwise unreflective groups that have a tendency to go off half-cocked. Each level (maximum five levels) gives -2 to Reaction-Time Modifier but also -1 to effective skill when carrying out the request.

Miserliness

see p. B144

The organization is extremely tight with funds by policy and internal culture. Anyone attempting to spend money on its behalf must make a successful Administration, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, or Merchant roll in order to get the expenditure approved, with penalties up to -5 for very large expenses. Facilities and gear are a step in quality below those appropriate for the organization's Wealth.

Secret

see p. B152

The organization is hiding a secret that could harm or destroy it; e.g., an illegal bioengineering project, business with the Nazis during the war, or a crazy aunt locked in the attic. If the truth is revealed, resulting scandals will cause a variety of problems for the organization, depending on the disadvantage's severity:

Serious Embarrassment: Lose 1d×5% of members. Roll 3d and suffer -1 Reputation on a roll of 12 or more.

Utter Rejection: Lose 2d×5% of members. Roll 3d and suffer -1 Reputation on a roll of 9 or more, or -2 Reputation on 15 or more.

Imprisonment or Exile: Lose (1d×10 + 20)% of members and suffer -2 Reputation. Roll 3d and lose one level of Wealth on a roll of 12 or more.

Possible Death: Lose (1d×10 + 40)% of members and suffer -3 Reputation. Roll 3d and lose one level of Wealth on 6 or more, or two levels on 12 or more.

If an organization has this trait, a similar Secret should be required for at least some of its members, though not necessarily all. For example, an illegal bioweapons program may be hidden from most rank-and-file members of a government research department. Personnel who deal directly with the project, and their managers, should have a suitable Secret – but janitors, receptionists, and anyone else who's kept in the dark about their organization's true purpose should not.

A group may also have Secret (Trade Secret), worth -5 points. This represents a body of proprietary information which gives the organization an edge in its field; e.g., data-mining methods, lists of customers, or closely held patents. There's nothing shameful or embarrassing about such secrets, but if they're revealed, the organization suffers in its area and loses a level of Wealth.

Signature Gear

see p. B85

An organization may provide distinctive equipment which serves as signature items for its members. It might replace this if lost. Particularly powerful artifacts – such as the rings issued by the Green Lantern Corps – go beyond gear to gadget-limited abilities!

Social Stigma

see pp. B155-156

Members of the organization receive a reaction penalty when acting on its behalf. For example, a clerk in a shop which is clearly associated with a despised minority might be treated with relative contempt by members of the majority while he's behind the counter, even if he's a member of the majority himself, but he wouldn't suffer that penalty if encountered off the job.

Unusual Background

see p. B96

This may be used as a catchall for other organizational abilities. In particular, it might indicate that the organization has access to magical or psionic capabilities in worlds where they're not usually available, or is the source of unusual learning, from Craft Secret Perks (***GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3: Daily Life and Economics,*** p. 24) to full-blown advantages like Trained by a Master. Enabling members to use unusual abilities costs 1 point per exotic perk that wouldn't apply to a normal Contact Group skill, 2 points for each remarkable skill or technique, or the full price of an extraordinary advantage or style (use style cost *instead of* the sum of costs for component skills, techniques, and perks).

Zeroed

see p. B100

There are no official records of the organization. At least initially, authorities and the general public will discount reports of it. Individual members need not be Zeroed, and their association with the group is unknown.

Save this for organizations which are completely unknown, such as successful secret societies and top-secret government agencies. Do not use it for groups that are nominally secret but whose presence is at least semi-officially known, even if internal details are unclear; e.g., crime syndicates under investigation, or government agencies whose *existence* is apparent (at least to their enemies) but whose *activities* are classified.

Notable Resources

A listing of the organization's important or distinctive physical resources. This usually includes a brief description of its facilities, but may extend to major real-estate holdings (e.g., hunting preserves and oil fields), notable vehicles, and significant pieces of equipment and infrastructure (such as transportation networks, unmanned satellites, and large spacecraft). Facilities with resources which differ from what the group's Wealth suggests can also be indicated here.

Secret Facilities

Some organizations operate out of sight of the public – and sometimes, their facilities are kept under wraps as well. This adds a point cost (see *Using Points,* p. 4):

Undisclosed: Some or all of the group's facilities lack visible signs, are kept off maps, and are not listed in public directories (or are listed under the name of a cover organization), and members don't discuss their location. For example, a Christian church in the first few centuries A.D., forced to function covertly, wouldn't display fish or crosses above its doors, while a spy agency might operate offices worldwide under the name of a shipping company or a scientific organization. Undisclosed facilities are perfectly visible from the outside, but their nature isn't immediately apparent. *1 point.*

Hidden: The group's facilities are physically disguised to blend in with their environment: forest camps secreted under camouflage netting, secret lairs stashed in volcanic craters, underground bases reached by concealed stairways or elevators disguised as phone booths, and so on. Locating hidden facilities requires active investigation and, at the very least, a successful skill roll (against Architecture, Observation, etc.). *5 points.*

Reaction-Time Modifier

This is a broad indicator of how quickly an organization can respond to requests. It reflects how well organized the group is in terms of both administrative processes and availability of physical resources, as well as the technological ease of communicating and coordinating activities. Use the *Reaction-Time Modifier Table* (p. 10) to determine a Reaction-Time Modifier which applies to all requests.

Because organizations often work particularly quickly or slowly when it comes to specialized tasks, the GM may specify different modifiers. For instance, an evil cult might list the following:

+2. The Blood-Red Priests take their mission of spreading evil seriously, but ceremonies require elaborate preparation, slowing routine services not directly connected to their core mission of terror and bloodshed. These include consecration of new converts (+3), stewing heretics (+5), and tossing virgins into the volcano (+6).

For further details, see *Reaction Time* (pp. 16-17).

Reaction-Time Modifier Table

Trait	*Modifier*
TL0-4	+2
TL5-6	+1
TL9-10	-1
TL11+	-2
Administration Contact skill* less than 12	+2
Administration* 12-14	+1
Administration* 18-20	-1
Administration* 21+	-2
Complexity	+(highest Rank the organization supports)/2, rounded down

* Use the most relevant Contact Group skill if the organization does not have Administration as a distinct skill.

Costs and Values

These reflect what it takes to bring an organization into a campaign, either building it from scratch or creating a long-term relationship with it.

Startup Cost

This is the cost in $ to start up a similar organization. It includes facilities, furniture, equipment, supplies, licensing and other official permissions, hiring costs for employees, and so on.

Base Startup Cost equals typical monthly pay for the organization's TL and Wealth (see p. B517), multiplied by the number of members times 12. If any members are troops, use their cost to raise (Raise) *instead;* see ***GURPS Mass Combat.***

Next, add up the point value of Contacts, Contact Groups, and any advantages and disadvantages under Member Traits, read the sum as a percentage, and apply this to the base cost. For example, an occult property-development firm might have business skills-12 [5], Occultism-12 [1], and Architecture-15 [2], giving +8% to base cost. The total modifier may not fall below -20%; treat lower values as -20%.

Resource Value

Resource Value is the $ amount of resources the organization can spend *per month* on things other than maintaining its core functions. It equals 0.5% of Startup Cost. This represents what the organization can ordinarily afford to spend on unusual equipment, bribes, capital improvements (and repairing damage sustained), hiring troops, and so on.

Examples: A local church's core mission is providing religious services and moral support to congregation members. Most of its revenues go toward maintaining a church building and paying its regular staff. However, it could spend money up to its Resource Value each month to support foreign missionaries or a renegade papyrologist's search for lost scrolls of spiritual significance.

A legitimate consumer technology company's core mission is producing and selling audio, video, and computer hardware. It spends most of its money maintaining facilities, paying employees, buying advertising and components from suppliers, and so on. But the company head could divert up to its Resource Value each month toward a secret division that develops crime-fighting robots.

Resource Value also funds off-the-books assistance provided to members and allies which falls into its area of expertise but doesn't consist of tasks it has been formally engaged to perform.

Example: If a crime-fighter is friends with the head of a forensics lab, he can talk his friend into analyzing evidence for him. However, that requires that the lab chief do work over and above what his lab is already tasked with. This may require overtime on the part of lab personnel, or at least use of facilities and consumables.

Patron Value

This is the organization's point cost as a Patron, including any built-in limitations or enhancements. A group's Startup Cost can be used as its assets for this purpose, though the GM may adjust this – see ***GURPS Social Engineering,*** p. 41, for variant rules for determining Patron value for small organizations. Organizational traits such as High TL and many Unusual Backgrounds may justify the Special Abilities enhancement (p. B73), but other considerations for Patrons (frequency of appearance, willingness, accessibility, equipment, etc.) are typically aspects of the Patron's relationship with a specific client rather than something inherent in the Patron.

Superman: Do your stockholders know about this, Bruce?
Batman: A line item hidden in the aerospace R&D budget.
*– **Justice League** #1.3*

Enemy Value

This is the organization's point cost as an Enemy. *Size* is the basic guideline here, but its ultimate value depends on the GM's assessment of its membership, who may have traits which have nothing to do with the organization's traits. For example, the Street Thugs' Book Club might be worth -10 points as an Enemy, but its value could jump to -20 points or even -30 points if it becomes the Supervillains' Book Club.

As with Patron Value, intent, frequency of appearance, enhancements, limitations, and so on are usually consequences of a specific relationship rather than a universal attribute of the organization's operations. There are inevitably exceptions, though! For example, a muckraking newspaper might *always* count as a Watcher, while a guild of assassins may *always* rate as a Hunter.

We are the United States Government! We don't do [peace on Earth].

– Bernard Abbot, in ***Sneakers***

Ally and Dependent Value

This is a general description of the Allies and Dependents the organization can potentially provide as individuals or a group, including a range of point values. The organization's headcount sets the maximum *number* of Allies available (adjusted for Loyalty; see below), but various sections may provide different *types* of Allies. For example, a crime syndicate might include a mix of low-point-value thugs and higher-point-value capos.

There's no hard correlation between the size and capabilities of an organization and its Ally and Dependent values, however. Though the organization's other traits indicate its positive abilities, they don't directly reflect the strengths and weaknesses of individual members. A platoon of warriors might be well-educated, well-adjusted men-about-town in their free time . . . or a batch of drug-addicted, deeply indebted, socially despised, and basically dull and narrowly if highly trained specialists.

An adventurer might wish to take an entire organization as Allies; e.g., a barbarian warrior may have a circle of seers as Allies, while a gadgeteer has a high-tech research firm. However, even assuming that the organization in question is suitable for such use (for example, the gadgeteer might be able to count on some of the scientists, but not the accountants or salespeople), organizations with poorer internal cohesion provide fewer Allies. If members don't get along with one another, they won't work effectively for someone else, either! To reflect this, Loyalty (p. 13) adjusts the maximum size of the group of Allies an organization can provide, as follows:

Loyalty	*Modifier*	*Loyalty*	*Modifier*
Disastrous	×0	Poor	×1/2
Very Bad	×1/10	Neutral	×2/3
Bad	×1/4	Good or better	×1

An organization with "Disastrous" Loyalty can still provide *individual* Allies, but they won't like working together.

Social Attributes

These stats reflect an organization's relationship with the world: what it does and how it is perceived.

Type

An organization's Type characterizes its nature and purpose. A group may have more than one Type; e.g., a Catholic rescue mission would have both Aid and Religious. Type should be limited to primary interests, however. For example, a large car manufacturer might provide charitable donations, research new car models and components, and spend money on lobbying politicians, but as those are all incidental activities, its Type is Commercial and not Aid, Research, or Advocacy.

A number of potential Types appear below. Many have recommended Contact skills, although these may be incorporated into larger Contact Group skills. For example, a Criminal organization should have Streetwise, but this might be an individual Contact skill or part of a broader criminal Contact Group skill.

Advocacy: Any group which promotes a social, political, or legislative agenda; e.g., any political party or lobbying firm, Greenpeace, and the National Rifle Association. Advocacy groups should possess at least one Influence skill (often including mass-influence skills like Propaganda and, in settings with "applied memetics," any skills that requires), and frequently have such skills as Current Affairs and Law.

Aid: Any group which provides relief for the poor, the endangered, or the otherwise disadvantaged, or that raises funds for such services; e.g., the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Nature Conservancy, and the American Cancer Society. Aid groups typically have Administration skill and frequently at least one of Area Knowledge and/or Current Affairs (to keep up with situations where their work is needed), Finance (to manage endowments), and Influence skills (to solicit contributions).

Commercial: Any legitimate moneymaking concern selling goods or services; e.g., General Electric, Steve Jackson Games, law firms, and temp agencies. Commercial groups should have Merchant skill and usually some other skill representing their area of business. This may be a technical or artistic skill for firms producing novel goods, Connoisseur or Current Affairs for resellers of goods, or almost any skill for consultants and service providers.

Criminal: A group which operates contrary to the law; e.g., organized crime syndicates, street gangs, and pirate brotherhoods. Criminal groups should have Streetwise as a Contact skill. They react to curious outsiders at -1 to -4, depending on the perceived odds of involvement with law-enforcement agencies.

Enforcement: A group which physically acts against criminals and nonmilitary enemies, and protects property and public order; e.g., the U.S. Coast Guard, police, and many intelligence agencies. There is some but not complete overlap between Investigative and Enforcement organizations.

For example, the NSA and Interpol have no enforcement wing, while a number of historical constabularies were essentially pure enforcement. Most Enforcement groups are Government, though Commercial ones can sometimes perform such functions as well (e.g., private bodyguard and security firms). Enforcement organizations tend to have a mix of Influence and combat skills.

Fraternal: An organization which promotes close relationships between members, or at least a comfortable common social venue and activities; e.g., Medieval Arab *futuwwa,* Victorian gentlemen's clubs, the Shriners, and the Freemasons. Some modern examples are sufficiently active in community service that they may be considered Aid organizations as well; others verge on being Hobby groups. Contact skills vary widely, depending on the membership's interests, but Fraternal organizations are frequently the source of mutual support in various ways. They can offer Member Traits such as Claim to Hospitality and Favor, and are also a good source of introductions (see *Pulling Rank,* p. 16).

Government: Any organ of a government; e.g., departments of war or defense, internal revenue services, spy agencies, foreign ministries, and agricultural and public-works bureaus. Government organizations usually provide Administration and Politics as Contact skills, and often Law.

Hobby: A group which brings together enthusiasts of a particular leisure or hobby activity; e.g., the American Kennel Association, amateur sports teams, and book clubs. Such organizations should have a Hobby Skill and/or a Connoisseur skill.

Investigative: An organization which seeks out secret or hidden information. This includes intelligence services (e.g., the NSA and CIA), law-enforcement agencies (from local police to the FBI), and private-investigation firms. Investigative groups should have a Contact skill such as Criminology, Forensics, or Intelligence Analysis if they provide specialized, sophisticated analysis services – or Observation, Search, or Streetwise if they're front-line investigators.

Military: An organization which provides armed force, such as national armies, navies, and air forces, Viking bands, and mercenary companies. Many Military groups are also Government, though mercenaries would be Commercial, while monastic fighting orders would be Religious. For front-line units, consider starting with ***GURPS Mass Combat*** and deriving other organizational stats from there; see *Mass Combat* (p. 18).

Occult: An organization which pursues the hidden aspects of the supernatural, including mages' and alchemists' guilds, and ghost-hunting franchises. Garden-variety Occult groups have Occultism as a Contact skill – though some may have Hidden Lore or even extraordinary skills like Alchemy, Thaumatology, or libraries of spells. Occult organizations often come off somewhat badly in public, as they're seen variously as crackpots (if society doesn't generally believe in the supernatural), dangerous (if it *does*), and smug or superior for having important knowledge of which they're the sole keepers. Consequently, Occult groups – even those just starting out – often have a small negative Reputation.

Religious: A group based on or promoting the goals of a specific faith. Religious groups often limit membership to coreligionists, though in more diverse societies, they may employ members of other religions while reserving leadership positions for people of their own faith. Religious groups typically provide Theology and Religious Ritual as Contact skills, and many also have Area Knowledge, Public Speaking, or Teaching.

Research: A group which performs scientific investigations aimed at the creation of new knowledge; e.g., CERN and NASA. Many universities are both Teaching and Research institutions, though some small and specialized academies – such as community colleges and four-year liberal-arts schools – may do little original research and therefore qualify as just Teaching. Research organizations should have at least one academic, scientific, or technical skill representing an area of investigation, usually at a high level.

Secret: An organization which tries to keep its existence – or at least its activities – hidden from public view. This includes more sophisticated Criminal groups (though *unsophisticated* criminals, such as pirates and street gangs, often act openly), covert Investigative agencies, and world-dominating conspiracies. An organization of this type may not be *successful* at secrecy, but it at least makes the attempt. Secret groups react at -2 to outsiders; if they're also Criminal, take the highest applicable penalty.

Teaching: The organization is devoted to the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of knowledge. This includes schools as well as think tanks like the Brookings Institute and the RAND Corporation. Teaching groups should have, at the very least, Teaching as a Contact skill. They typically also have at least one Expert skill, covering their area(s) of expertise, and often a modest level of Research.

Trade: An organization of people who practice a similar trade or other professional work; e.g., the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the American Medical Association, GAMA, craft guilds, grange associations, and bar associations. Contact skills tend to be administrative, but such groups can provide very high skill levels in their area of interest (for example, a blacksmith's guild provides at least one specialty of the Smith skill). Trade associations often have the power to grant and revoke the credentials necessary to practice the trade they oversee.

Secret Societies: Not So Secret

Historically, groups referred to as "secret societies," such as Skull and Bones (a fraternity-like organization at Yale University, whose membership boasts a number of presidents and other high officials) and the "Know Nothings" (an anti-immigrant party of the 1850s), are organizations which *have* secrets rather than ones which *are* secret. Since the former group has an architecturally distinctive headquarters on High Street in New Haven while the latter issued posters promoting its presidential candidates, they can hardly be regarded as invisible. They qualify as Secret for attempting to conceal their inner workings. But truly secret organizations should take Zeroed or a similar trait to indicate that they're *successful* at those attempts.

Voluntary: A group whose membership mostly or entirely donates its funding or labor. A Voluntary organization might not pay many of its members, and is likely to provide those it does pay with incomes well below its organizational Wealth. As such groups are very dependent on their members' good will to operate effectively, they suffer -5% to Resource Value and -1 to all skill rolls for every step in Loyalty below Neutral, in addition to other penalties. However, they also enjoy +5% to Resource Value per step *above* Neutral.

This isn't an exhaustive list! The GM may come up with more types appropriate to the campaign.

CR (Control Rating)

An organization's Control Rating measures the degree of power the group has over its members – the higher the CR, the greater the control. Levels have a different meaning from those used for government CR, however:

CR6: The organization exercises direct physical or psychological control over its members, achieved through brainwashing, enchantment, cranial implants, or similar techniques. Members are often unable even to think of betraying their organization without outside prompting.

CR5: The organization exerts complete social control over its members, to the point of dictating everyday activities and matters such as diet, occupation, and even when and how one member speaks to others and to outsiders (e.g., monastic discipline).

CR4: The organization has considerable control over its members and their everyday activities, including the ability to try them and apply significant punishments (e.g., military-style discipline or canon law).

CR3: The organization has significant control over its members. It can adjust pay, or impose difficult personal choices on pain of expulsion (e.g., revising a job description to include significant new responsibilities or requiring transfer to a remote location). However, it can only indirectly influence members' activity outside the organization, and has little or no legal authority over them.

CR2: The organization can exert modest material control over its members. It may levy fines (no more than a month's income) and cause acute social embarrassment, but it generally cannot control a member's activities outside the organization.

CR1: The organization exercises minimal control over its members. It may formally censure them or, in extreme cases, expel them.

Loyalty

Loyalty represents the general attitude of the members of the organization toward its leadership and the organization as an institution. It uses levels from the *Reaction Table* (pp. B560-561): Poor, Neutral, Good, and so on. Each level has a range of numeric values associated with it. Also record a number within that range – which functions as a specific measurement of Loyalty – for later reference.

Disastrous (0): The organization is in the process of coming apart. Members argue frequently, obstruct one another out of malice, and sometimes come to blows. They'll happily side against their colleagues and actively sabotage those around them. If it's possible for rank-and-file members to seize control, mutiny is imminent! Effective skill levels – if any effort can be brought to bear – are at -5. Time to perform any action (hire new employees, respond to inquiries, etc.) is *quadrupled*.

Very Bad (1 to 3): Members dislike the organization intensely; most are actively looking for a way out. They frequently argue, and work slowly and inefficiently; pilfering of the group's resources is rife. Effective skill levels are at -2. Time required to perform any action is *doubled*.

Bad (4 to 6): Members dislike the organization and are open to better offers, or they look out solely for their own interests. Cooperation between them is poor, and few make their best effort. Time to perform any action is increased by 50%.

Poor (7 to 9): Members aren't particularly enthusiastic about the organization, but stay on out of inertia or simply lack of better opportunities. Many who stay are willing to advance themselves even if it leads to moderate harm for the institution as a whole. They won't take risks to allow others to carry out significant actions against the organization, but may be persuaded to participate in what they believe to be small violations of policy.

Neutral (10 to 12): Members have no strong attachment to the organization, but they hold it no ill will, either.

Good (13 to 15): Members are well-inclined toward the organization. They are happy or proud to be members, and will make extra efforts to achieve its goals, if need be. It is difficult to find members willing to betray the group.

Very Good (16 to 18): Members are very happy with the organization, make its success a high priority in their lives, and are entirely willing to undertake extended, extraordinary efforts on its behalf. A significant number may have a Sense of Duty to the group, or similar traits.

Excellent (19): Members are near-fanatical in their devotion to the organization. Indeed, many may have the Fanaticism disadvantage!

Among other things, Loyalty gives members a Will modifier to resist Influence rolls aimed at getting them to do something contrary to the organization's interests or policies:

Loyalty	***Modifier***	***Loyalty***	***Modifier***
Disastrous	-7	Neutral	+0
Very Bad	-5	Good	+1
Bad	-3	Very Good	+3
Poor	-1	Excellent	+5

Members *further* add half of the organization's CR, rounded down, as a Will bonus. In tightly controlled groups, members are more intimidated by the leadership, or simply too closely watched to get away with much.

Record Loyalty level, numeric Loyalty value, and the *total* Will modifier on the same line, like so: Good (14; +2).

Rank

This indicates the appropriate variety of Rank to take to represent position in the organization, along with the range of allowable values and the character-point cost per level. Armies and navies have Military Rank, temples and priestly orders have Religious Rank, and so on. Rank starts at 0 in most cases, but an elite group that's part of a larger organization (e.g., the College of Cardinals, or Gene Roddenberry's initial "officers-only" conception of Starfleet) may have a higher minimum. Most organizations follow *The Arithmetic of Rank* (***GURPS Social Engineering,*** p. 14), with members at any given Rank overseeing four or five people of the next Rank down, but exceptions are certainly possible in particularly hierarchical or egalitarian groups.

Organizations frequently have forms of Rank which translate into little or no Status, offer access to relatively mundane resources, or otherwise don't bear all the advantages of Rank as described on pp. B29-30 (nor the obligations; working for such a group rarely bears a Duty, either). Typical cost for Rank in a business, a modest government agency, or a religious or cultural group in a pluralistic society – which offers a minimum of adventure-relevant assets to call on (expert advice, tacit off-the-books access to facilities such as labs and vehicles, authority over subordinates in adventuring situations, and so on) – is 2 points/level, or maybe 3 points/level for organizations which offer exceptional resources or greater social influence. If position within a group provides *no* adventuring benefits beyond a salary, it doesn't count as Rank. See *Variant Costs of Rank* (***Social Engineering,*** pp. 14-15) for details on pricing such Rank.

Income Range

This is the range of monthly incomes the organization's employees might earn, including both a $ figure and the corresponding required Wealth level for the lowest- and highest-paid jobs available.

Personal Wealth for the minimum and maximum income often corresponds closely to the organization's Wealth for small groups, but there can be a wider spread for larger ones; e.g., the proprietor of a single shop selling cheap goods probably makes little more than his minimum-wage workers, while the owner of a vast chain of similar stores can be exceptionally wealthy. Still, even small groups can have a significant variance between organizational and personal Wealth. An elite espionage agency may use cutting-edge stealth aircraft, ultra-sophisticated surveillance gear, customized weapons, and other extremely expensive equipment – giving it high Wealth – but pay relatively modest civil-service wages. Conversely, a crime syndicate might operate out of the back room of a shabby bar and have no office equipment of its own, yet its members can rake in a lot of money.

Reputation

The value and nature of the organization's Reputation, if any. For example, a temple might enjoy a positive Reputation as a dispenser of charity, while an organized-crime family may have a negative Reputation for brutality. If a member is recognized as belonging to the group and perceived to be acting on its behalf, both organizational *and* personal Reputation apply, to the usual maximum of +4 or minimum of -4. Like individuals, organizations can have multiple Reputations; e.g., a sports team may boast a positive Reputation at home but suffer a negative one in a rival town.

Reputation is an idle and most false imposition.
– William Shakespeare, ***Othello***

Notes

Notes offer more-detailed information on the organization's membership and place in the world. This may include such elements as:

- Distinctive activities, ceremonies, or techniques.
- Membership requirements.
- Likely self-imposed member traits.
- Relationships with other significant organizations.
- Specific technologies of interest, if the organization has an exceptional TL.
- Unusual demographic aspects.

Chapter Two
Organizations in Play

In some campaigns, adventurers may slog through the wilderness, meeting no group bigger than a hive of fire ants. In many others, though, they'll routinely encounter organizations ranging from churches and temples to government bureaucracies to institutions of learning to massive corporations. They might even be in charge of organizations themselves!

Facing an Organization

So far as adventurers are concerned, when dealing with an organization from the outside (for example, when infiltrating or fighting directly against it – or hiring it!), the most important traits are Wealth and Resource Value, which measure its physical resources; Contact skills, which represent its capabilities; Control Rating and Loyalty, which affect its resistance to outside influence; and Reaction-Time Modifier, which indicates how quickly it responds.

Wealth and Resource Value

Wealth and Resource Value define how much power an organization can bring to bear. The former suggests the *kind* of gear and facilities it's likely to have, while the latter measures the *quantity* of manpower and other resources it can devote to dealing with unusual circumstances, such as infiltration by or retaliation against adventurers.

As Wealth determines what security precautions a group can afford, it can provide a generic guideline as to how well its facilities resist infiltration attempts. The table below associates each Wealth level with a typical modifier to attempts to break into an organization's facilities using Lockpicking, Electronics Operation (Security), Computer Hacking, and similar skills for physical or virtual intrusion; this *does not* apply to Influence skills used against members, nor to Intelligence Analysis (which covers analyzing information, not breaking in and getting it). Infiltrating a Poor organization is a "Very Favorable" task (see *Task Difficulty,* pp. B345-346), and it gets harder from there.

Wealth	*Modifier*	*Wealth*	*Modifier*
Poor	+3	Wealthy	-3
Struggling	+1	Very Wealthy	-5
Average	+0	Filthy Rich	-7
Comfortable	-1		

Contact Skills

Just as important are the organization's Contact skills. Wealth and Resource Value define the quality and quantity of resources the group can bring to bear on a problem; skills rate how competently it uses those assets. When its members are encountered, its Contact skills may be used for any skill rolls those people need to make, rolling at -3; organizations have the time to pull together multiple resources when used as Contacts, but they're more pressed in the field. For example, if an enemy hires a syndicate of hit men that lists "criminal skills-15" under Contacts, the GM will use an effective skill level of 12 for Shadowing (to keep track of targets), Stealth (to close with the target), Guns (to hit the target), and Housekeeping (to clean up afterward).

Social Engineering

These rules concern dealing with an organization as a *generic whole:* its capabilities with various tasks, increasing its size, and so on. Dealing with individual members (for example, bribing a guard or talking your way past a secretary to see an executive) still uses the regular rules for social interactions. ***GURPS Social Engineering*** offers copious advice for such efforts.

Control Rating and Loyalty

Control Rating and Loyalty define how easily (or not!) someone in the organization can be persuaded to act against the group's interests. As *Loyalty* (pp. 13-14) explains, high CR and Loyalty keep members in line, granting Will bonuses to resist Influence rolls.

Organizations can't count on member good will indefinitely, though – events which are difficult for the organization are demoralizing, particularly if imposed by its leaders. Whenever the group suffers particular hardship (e.g., terrorist attack on its facilities, or downturn in finances damaging its Wealth) or members are unduly put at risk by those in charge, make a Loyalty check: Roll 3d against the numeric Loyalty value, at -2 if members are actually *harmed* by the leadership. Failure gives -1 to the numeric Loyalty score for 1d/2 months, rounded up. If such penalties ever reach -3 or worse, apply a *permanent* -1 to Loyalty.

Pulling Rank

GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank provides extended rules for obtaining assistance from one's employers, depending on both the type and level of Rank one holds. Members of an organization may use Rank of the sort listed for their group to determine their chances of getting aid when using those rules.

The kinds of assistance a given organization is inclined to provide correspond very roughly to its Type. Here are some recommendations along those lines:

Advocacy: Funding, Introduction, Invitation.
Aid: Cash, Introduction, Transportation (all).
Commercial: Material Aid (all), Social Privilege (all), Transportation (all).
Criminal: Covert Activity (all), Muscle, The Cavalry.
Enforcement: Authorization (all), Muscle, The Cavalry.
Fraternal: Introduction, Invitation.
Government: Authorization (all).
Hobby: Gear, Introduction, Invitation.
Investigative: Covert Activity (all), Information (all).
Military: Violence (all).
Occult: Consultation, Files, Gear.
Religious: Facilities, Information (all), Introduction, Invitation.
Research: Facilities, Information (all).
Secret: Covert Activity (all).
Teaching: Facilities, Funding, Information (all), Introduction, Technical Means.
Trade: Gear, Hireling, Introduction, Invitation, Job, Service.
Voluntary: Information (all), Introduction, Invitation.

This list is neither exclusive nor comprehensive! For example, history shows that nominally legitimate groups will attempt cover-ups if they feel sufficiently threatened (though the *quality* of such actions is often dubious).

Reductions that drop the quantitative rating into the range associated with a lower qualitative level, temporarily or permanently, cause the group to function at that level; e.g., -1 to Poor (7) results in Bad (6).

Reaction Time

When an organization must act, it can take a while to make the decision to do so, let alone gather the appropriate personnel and equipment. Whenever someone makes a non-trivial request for assistance, and anytime it's important to figure out how quickly the group can effectively react to new circumstances, roll 3d plus the organization's Reaction-Time Modifier, and add any applicable modifiers on the *Situational Modifiers Table* (below). For a request, the requestor may try an Influence skill roll and subtract margin of success (maximum -5) or add margin of failure (no limit!) as well. Look up the final total on the *Reaction-Time Table* (below) to find the timeframe for a response.

Reaction-Time Table

The results below include the time to make a decision to provide aid *and* to initiate delivery (e.g., prep and fuel a private jet, or rally initiates in the central temple to begin the summoning ritual). Travel and shipping times may add delays, however. For example, when calling on a gang of local toughs to provide some muscle, it might take only an hour or two to make the right phone calls to get them together, but several hours more if they must catch a train to an out-of-town location.

Roll	*Reaction Time*	*Roll*	*Reaction Time*
-4 or less	Immediately	8	5 1/2 hours
-3	4 minutes	9	8 hours
-2	6 minutes	10	12 hours
-1	8 minutes	11	16 hours
0	15 minutes	12	1 day
1	20 minutes	13	1.5 days
2	25 minutes	14	2 days
3	40 minutes	15	3 days
4	60 minutes	16	5 days
5	80 minutes	17	7 days
6	2 hours	18	10 days
7	3 1/2 hours		

Situational Modifiers Table

Request	*Modifier*	*Notes*
Request for readily available information	-(TL/2), rounded up	[1]
Requestor's Rank in the organization	-(Rank/2), rounded up	
Cost of request	+1 per full 1% of Resource Value	
Unusual request (Versatile organization)	+1	[2]
Unusual request (most organizations)	+2	[2]
Unusual request (Hidebound organization)	+4	[2]
Very unusual request	Double modifier for unusual request	[3]

Notes

[1] "Readily available information" includes information that doesn't require significant processing or analysis. For example, a dossier on a subject of the organization's observations would qualify. Cross-indexed charts of contacts between subjects probably wouldn't.

[2] "Unusual requests" include anything that falls outside of the organization's Mission Statement.

[3] "Very unusual requests" include anything unusual for an organization of its Type.

For totals higher than 18, subtract 14, find the result in the "Size" column of the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), and read over to "Linear Measurement," substituting "days" for "yards." For example, 19 would give 19 - 14 = 5, corresponding to 15 yards and hence 15 days.

Starting an Organization

Characters may attempt to create new organizations in the course of play. To do so, the prospective founder must indicate what traits he'd like the organization to have, provide funding equal to the Startup Cost (p. 10), and make a series of rolls against appropriate skills to get the desired features (much like the rolls for finding a hireling, but representing work on a larger scale).

Designating Traits

The organization's founder may specify **Mission Statement,** desired **Members, Wealth, Contacts, Member Traits,** and **Control Rating** (but if local laws prohibit the creation of groups with high CRs, Type must include either Criminal or Secret). **Tech Level** is usually that of the surrounding society. Figured stats – **Reaction-Time Modifier, Startup Cost,** and **Resource Value,** and for the most part **Patron Value** and **Enemy Value** – ought to follow from these decisions. The player should collaborate with the GM to set **Rank** and arrive at a suitable description of **Notable Resources.**

The GM determines **Ally and Dependent Value,** which will generally correspond to the minimum point values of the characters necessary to supply only the traits paid for by Startup Cost. For example, a company that refills vending machines is likely to provide low-level blue-collar workers as Allies, not ex-Special Forces personnel, unless it's recruiting in some very strange areas!

Type should follow naturally from the organization's purpose. **Loyalty** cannot be specified; it's set by a separate reaction roll (see *Loyalty Roll,* p. 19). New groups start with no **Reputation.**

As for **Income Range,** minimum income may be set at will so long as it supports the jobs necessary to provide the desired skills and traits. An organization can pay below market rates, but then the GM is free to impose additional conditions; e.g., Type might automatically include Voluntary, or the group may have to employ people who don't fit in elsewhere, requiring widespread disadvantages among the membership. Initial maximum income for player-generated organizations is limited by the Members stat; generally speaking, there isn't enough money or difference in power to support vast gaps in income for small groups. Use the table below to find the maximum difference between organizational Wealth and the personal Wealth associated with the highest income the group offers:

Organization Size	*Maximum Difference*
Less than 100	1
100-999	2
1,000-4,999	3
5,000-9,999	4
10,000-49,999	5
50,000-99,999	6
100,000 or more	7

For example, an organization with 25 members and a Wealth of Average could support nothing higher than a Comfortable income for its highest-paid staff. That would increase to Wealthy for a group with 500 members, or Very Wealthy for one with 3,000 members.

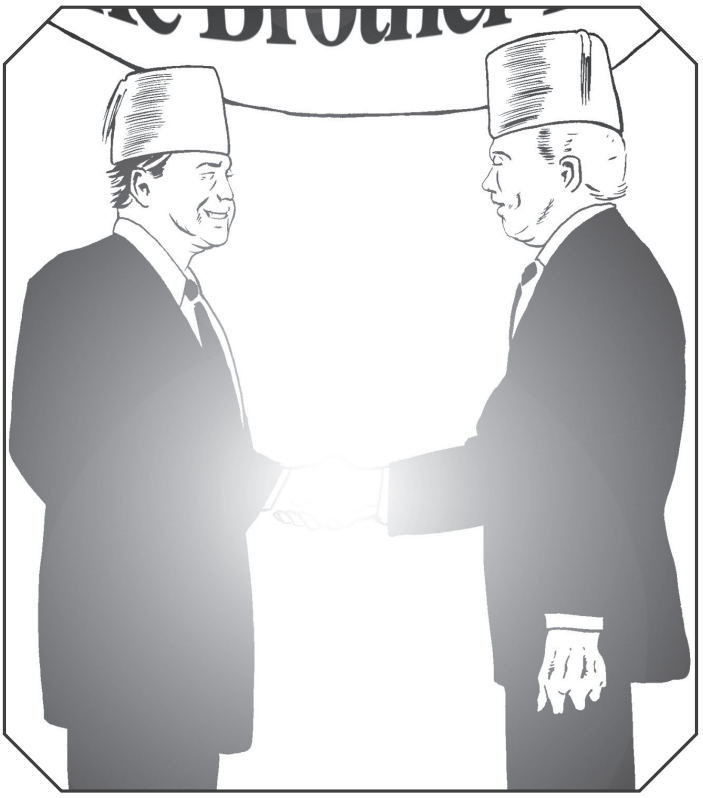
All traits of player-designed organizations are subject to the GM's approval and unilateral modification. As with Allies, players may express preferences, but what they actually *get* is the GM's call. Certain decisions can have ramifications for the character, too; e.g., if the founder wants to create a job that pays better than his Wealth allows, he must pay the points to increase his Wealth to that level!

Skill Rolls

The skill necessary to start an organization is usually Administration, but Leadership may be substituted for Military groups, or Streetwise for Criminal ones. The founder must make a successful roll against this skill for Members, *each* Contact skill, and *each* trait under Member Traits. The following modifiers apply:

Organization Size: Rolls are at a penalty based on the organization's size relative to the available population from which it can attempt to draw members:

% of Population	*Modifier*
1% or more	-3
More than 0.10%	-2
More than 0.02%	-1
More than 0.01%	+0
More than 0.002%	+1
More than 0.001%	+2
0.001 % or less	+3



Advertising: Advertising for members costs 0.1% of the typical monthly income for the target audience, multiplied by audience size, for +1 to the skill roll. Multiply cost by two for +2, ×5 for +3, ×20 for +4, or ×100 for +5.

Availability: Some traits may require a suitable penalty set by the GM, if they're available at all. Someone trying to found a university in medieval Europe will have a very hard time finding Sanskrit scholars and simply won't be able to get High TL 5. Many supernatural traits – like Blessed, Higher Purpose, and Divine Curse – must necessarily be granted by higher powers. Attempts to find sources of particularly rare traits can be adventures in themselves!

Risk: -2 if the organization primarily hires noncombatants but its activities involve significant personal risk; e.g., an Aid organization which sends rescue workers into disaster areas.

Failure on the roll for a skill or other trait means the organization cannot start with that trait. Failure on the roll for Members means the organization doesn't start at all, though this probably means a delay in starting operations rather than an outright failure – the prospective founder may reroll as described below.

Mass Combat

GURPS Mass Combat provides detailed rules for creating fighting units and adjudicating battles between them. As armies are organizations, there's some overlap between ***Mass Combat*** and this supplement. Organizations like army hospitals, internal-investigation teams, and cyber-defense units can be readily described using ***Boardroom and Curia,*** but players who want to create armed forces with the detailed breakdown of combat capabilities that implies may want to start by defining them with ***Mass Combat*** and then deriving organizational stats from that basis.

> *There's always someone higher up where you can pass the buck!*
>
> *– Irving Berlin, "Gee, I Wish I Was Back In The Army"*

Some properties translate quite readily. For example, cost to raise (Raise) can be substituted for Startup Cost. Type is obviously Military, though some units may have other Types. Whatever rank structure the unit from ***Mass Combat*** uses counts as Rank. Most derived values (Reaction-Time Modifier, Resource Value, Patron Value, Enemy Value, etc.) can be figured as for any organization. However, some stats require translation.

Members: To find a unit's approximate size, multiply the number of land and air elements by 10, and the number of naval elements by 200. For the logistics force, add (5,000 × LS)/(average monthly income for the TL), rounded up. If desired, players may substitute more precise figures, where these are known (e.g., historical numbers for the crews of Greek triremes or modern aircraft carriers). Some fantasy elements – notably giant monsters, leviathans, sea monsters, and titans – only count as one.

Wealth: Divide total cost to raise by (number of members × average monthly income for the TL) and use the highest applicable category on the following table to determine Wealth:

Ratio	*Wealth*
Less than 0.5	Poor
Up to 1	Struggling
Up to 2	Average
Up to 5	Comfortable
Up to 20	Wealthy
Up to 100	Very Wealthy
More than 100	Filthy Rich

Use the descriptions in ***Mass Combat*** for equipment quality. Military organizations tend to have good equipment and spartan facilities, so they can easily have better gear than their Wealth implies, at the cost of uncomfortable buildings in unglamorous locations.

Contacts: Military organizations have "military skills" as a Contact Group skill. Level depends on troop quality:

Quality	*Skill*
Elite	21
Good	18
Average	15
Inferior	12

Member Traits: Most of a force's abilities are folded into its Contact skills, but some units, notably those with fantasy elements, may have such traits as Flight or Magery.

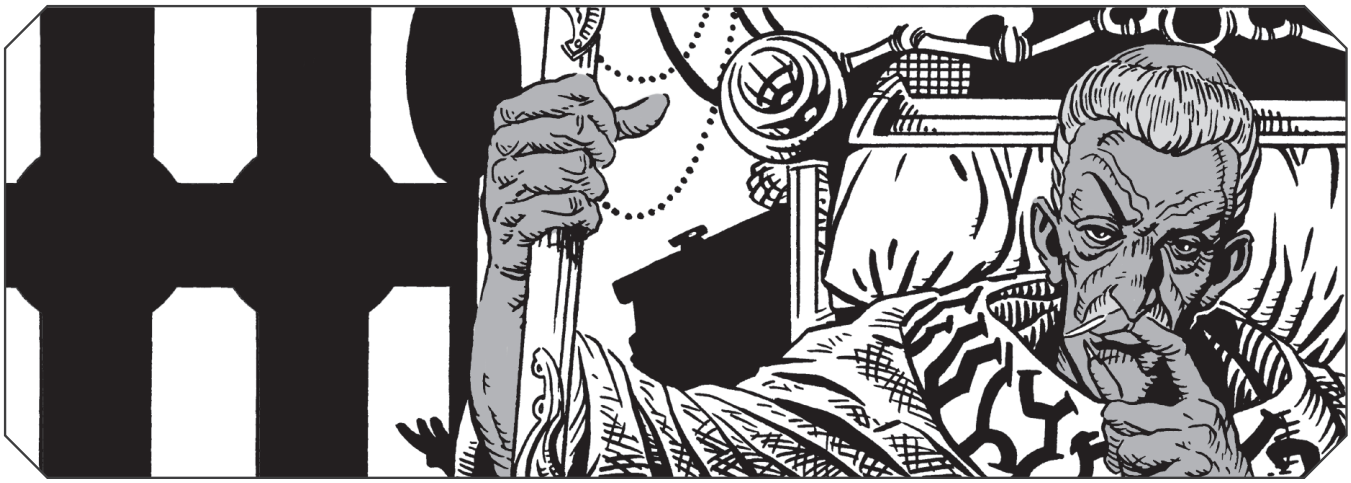
CR: The GM must designate this, but it's typically fairly high.

Loyalty: Start with Neutral (11) and modify the numeric value according to the unit's features:

Feature	*Modifier*
Disloyal	-6
Fanatic	+8
Levy	-1
Inferior troop quality	-1
Good troop quality	+3
Elite troop quality	+5

Base qualitative Loyalty level on the final, modified number.

Income Range: For any given element, minimum pay cannot exceed the element's cost to maintain (Maintain) divided by the number of people in the element, and is rarely more than half of that.



Base time to create an organization is one month for groups with up to 100 members, plus an additional month for every extra multiple of 10 (two months for up to 1,000 members, three for up to 10,000, and so on). The founder can reroll failures monthly, but must pay an additional 2% of Startup Cost per month to extend the effort. Critical failure means the founder cannot continue to roll for the trait in question and must, if he desires to continue, start over with new funding as if adding a new trait (see *Change Traits,* p. 20).

Loyalty Roll

Loyalty is set by a reaction roll to the founder. However, as there's some distance between an organization and its leader (members may feel one way about their leader but differently about the other people around them), *halve* the founder's reaction modifiers. In addition, apply a modifier of +(1 - CR). Record both the numerical result of this roll and the corresponding reaction level, and then determine the Will modifier (see *Loyalty,* pp. 13-14).

Permission

One other thing that may be necessary to start an organization is legal permission, in the form of licenses, municipal permits, royal charters, or various approvals by regulators, official censors, or other overseers of the public good.

In relatively free societies (societal CR2 or lower), no special permission from authorities is needed to start an organization, or permission is trivial to obtain, so no additional tasks are necessary.

At societal CR3, special permission may be needed for some types of organizations. Examples include Investigative groups in societies with strong privacy protection, Enforcement groups in societies which strongly restrict use of force, and Religious groups in societies with official religions. If such regulation exists, make an unmodified Administration roll to obtain appropriate authorization.

At higher societal CRs, permission must be obtained to start *any* organization. This requires an Administration roll, unmodified for CR4, at -3 for CR5, or at -6 for CR6. Powerful people are in a better position to get what they want, however; apply the founder's Status as a bonus to this roll. Persuading the right people to permit the foundation of a new organization can be an elaborate social adventure in itself.

In most societies, Government organizations cannot be started without direction from another government body. By definition, Criminal groups don't have and can't get permission to exist, though they may have legitimate "cover" identities. Likewise, in some societies, high organizational CRs may be prohibited (e.g., in the modern United States, even the broadest reading of the First Amendment wouldn't allow a death cult to use human sacrifice as a tool of internal discipline!), and thus used only by Secret or Criminal organizations.

Running an Organization

So once you come to control an organization, what do you *do* with it? Quite possibly not much, at least when it comes to adventuring.

The day-to-day details of running an organization typically happen off-stage. As well, the person in charge usually *can't* treat the group and its members as mere pieces of equipment to do with as he will; the head of a charity or president of a corporation who orders employees to go on suicide missions will get blank, puzzled looks at best, and quite possibly letters of resignation and rumors about mental infirmity. And even the most powerful insufficiently lit lord who orders the peasants in his domain to make swords and armor is likely to end up with bad swords and armor, and a lot of starving peasants.

Who's In Charge Here?

The rules for running an organization talk about the leader of an organization making the relevant success rolls. A single, autocratic ruler need not do all the work or make all the decisions, however. The resolution to undertake any given action might come from one person, an executive board, or even popular vote by the membership. ***GURPS Social Engineering*** offers mechanics for persuading individuals and groups that would be ideal for gaming out such decision-making processes. However the decision is made, though, *someone* – a chief executive, a trusted subordinate, perhaps even an expert brought in from outside – has to be designated to head up the work. Make all rolls against that character's skill.

An organization's leader is subject to restrictions placed on him by its traits – notably its CR, which limits how much he can get away with, and its Contact skills, which limit what it can do once set in motion.

That doesn't mean he's powerless, though! Resource Value provides a budget which can be used for goods or their equivalent in labor to carry out tasks at his discretion, within the bounds of the organization's capabilities and his control over it. It may also be used to fund both short-term and structural changes in the organization, selecting from among the options described below. A leader may attempt *one* of the following tasks per month. Bonuses for *Time Spent* (p. B346) apply, but this increases cost proportionately (double cost for two months, quadruple cost for four, and so on).

The Limits of Power

The person in charge of an organization may use its resources to flexible ends but usually cannot exploit them freely. Anything the leader attempts to do with the organization by definition involves other people, who are likely to notice and object if the action is contrary to the organization's purpose; e.g., if the head of an orphanage spends donations on anti-aircraft weapons, or a CEO hands trade secrets over to a competitor. Objectionable dealings trigger a Loyalty check (see *Control Rating and Loyalty,* pp. 15-16) at a bonus equal to half the organization's CR, rounded down. Failure means those deeds become public knowledge; in addition to the usual consequences of a failed Loyalty check, the offender's actions are communicated to whatever authorities that individual must answer to. Precise consequences are up to the GM, depending on the offense and the power of those informed to do something about it, but they're frequently *personal* for the offending party; e.g., arrest and trial, or even assassination attempts.

Change Reputation

Anyone with enough time and money may attempt to influence the public perception of a group. A propaganda campaign can temporarily modify organizational Reputation. This costs 0.1% of the typical monthly pay for the target audience multiplied by the size of that audience, takes a month, and requires a Quick Contest between Propaganda skill and the audience's average Will. Victory gives +1 or -1 to the organization's Reputation (as the propagandist desires) for 1d/2 months, rounded up.

Change Traits

A leader may attempt to increase existing Contact skills, add new ones, or add other Member Traits. To calculate the cost, multiply together typical *annual* income for the organization's Wealth, the number of Members, and the improvements' point value, and divide by 100. To see if the attempt succeeds, roll against Administration or other relevant skill, using the same modifiers as for initial recruiting attempts. If the effort succeeds, adjust Startup Cost appropriately.

Embezzlement

An organization's leader is well-placed to redirect funds into his own pocket. Roll against Administration to receive 0.05% of the group's Resource Value as additional personal income for a month. Optionally, make the roll at -3 to double that amount or at -8 to triple it. However, the embezzler must *also* roll as described in *The Limits of Power* (above) – at the same penalty, if any – to avoid being discovered!

Improve Morale

Internal morale may be temporarily improved. Use the rules under *Change Reputation* (above), with the members of the organization as the target audience. Success gives +1 to the organization's Loyalty for 1d/2 months, rounded up.

Increase Resources

A skilled leader can squeeze a bit more money out of the organization, but it's risky. Resource Value may be increased for a month in increments of 5%. This requires a roll against Finance skill at -1 per +5%. Critical success doubles the desired extra income. Failure reduces the month's income by the intended amount of increase. Critical failure diminishes income by that much for 1d/2 months, rounded up.

Recruit Members

A leader may try to expand the organization by recruiting new members, rolling against the same skill used to start the organization, and taking same modifiers. Cost is equal to Startup Cost, divided by the number of current members and multiplied by the desired number of new members. If the attempt succeeds, update Startup Cost to reflect the enlarged membership.

Dip dip dip dip dip dip dip dip
Mum mum mum mum mum mum
Get a job.

– The Silhouettes, "Get a Job"

Chapter Three
Sample Organizations

An organization's stats provide a sketch of its capabilities, but just as characters need a backstory as well as stats, organizations require a fuller description to function in the context of a campaign. The following examples – a mix of real and fictional groups – are presented with stats, history, current structure and activities, and notable members:

- The Medici bank is one of the wealthiest commercial concerns of the Renaissance.
- The organization of Doctor Joachim Zynfami is the private army of a Cold War-era mad-science villain.
- The Provisional IRA is an underground political organization using terror tactics to bring about Irish independence.
- The Mid-City Defenders is a local superhero team.
- Médecins Sans Frontières is a charitable organization providing medical assistance and other humanitarian aid to all manner of global hot spots.
- Biotech Euphrates is a major corporation of the ***Transhuman Space*** setting.
- The Raiders of the Black Void are a brotherhood of dimension-hopping pirates loosely affiliated with (and disowned by) Infinite Worlds' Cabal.

Medici Bank, c. 1450

Though Tuscany's extended Medici family had been involved in banking since at least the early 14th century, what became known as *the* Medici bank was founded in 1397, when Giovanni di Bicci de Medici moved to Florence from Rome to establish a bank of his own. The bank grew rapidly, taking advantage of the Medicis' close relations with the Papacy, increased trade opportunities in Western Europe in the wake of Florence's conquest of Pisa shortly after the bank's foundation, establishment of a successful branch in eastward-looking Venice, and Florence's own growing textile trade. In 1434, Giovanni's son Cosimo took charge, overseeing more decades of expansion.

The Medici concern's primary business is providing large loans, mostly for international commerce but also to support the Papacy's cash flow. The bank tries *not* to lend to princes and secular governments, who have very bad records of repayment. It handles money-changing tasks for merchants and other moneyed travelers, and takes deposits on which it pays interest, much like a modern savings account, though typically with restrictions on withdrawals and minimum amounts to be invested (other banks deal in petty amounts). The bank also operates subsidiary concerns. In Florence, it owns textile-processing operations, coordinating semi-independent craftsmen working in silk and wool. Elsewhere in Italy, it operates alum mines owned by the Papacy.

The bank operates at a time when banking occupies an ambiguous moral and legal position. For centuries, it has been illegal for Christians to loan money to one another at interest, but the accelerating economy of the Renaissance has created a huge demand for borrowed money. When a non-Christian party – usually a member of Europe's small and long-suffering Jewish community – cannot be employed as a middleman, banks get around this restriction by structuring transactions in ways which have the practical effect of getting a return on money without explicitly charging interest. For example, a loan might come with fees nominally added as a charge for the bank's effort, carefully calculated discounted exchange rates might be applied to different currencies, or agreements might be made to purchase goods at artificially inflated or depressed prices, hiding interest in a conventional commercial transaction. The Medici bank's textile operation serves as both an industrial concern in its own right and as cover for what are really banking transactions. The bank is also able to keep its transactions relatively confidential, making it difficult to substantiate specific accusations of usury. It maintains multiple account ledgers for various purposes including, quite possibly, falsified records which might be produced to avoid taxes.

Income Gap

The recommended monthly pay range for a job (see *Jobs,* pp. B516-517) is between the standard income for its associated Wealth level one TL lower and that for one TL higher. That's fine as a guideline for PCs looking for work, but it leaves some gaps; e.g., at TL8, the best Average job pays $3,600 per month, while the worst Comfortable job pays $4,200, leaving a $600 range where it's unclear what the applicable Wealth level is. Not surprisingly, a few of the jobs drawn from real-world examples here fall into those gaps. In those cases, the cap on income for each Wealth level remains the same. That then becomes the floor for the next Wealth level. In the TL8 case, Average jobs go up to $3,600 per month, and Comfortable jobs start at that point.

Medici Bank

Mission Statement: The Medici bank provides a range of financial services to the very wealthy – notably loans to merchants and the Papacy. Cosimo de Medici, informal ruler of Florence, sets some policies for sensible management of the firm's money, but local managers have significant freedom of action within those bounds.

Capabilities

TL: 4 **Members:** 65
Wealth: Filthy Rich
Contacts: Business skills-18 [15]; Finance-21 [4]
Member Traits: None
Notable Resources: The bank has modest offices in Avignon, Bruges, Florence, Geneva, London, Pisa, Rome, and Venice. It also operates a pair of textile factories in Florence.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $74,256,000 **Resource Value:** $371,280
Patron Value: 15 points **Enemy Value:** -20 points
Ally and Dependent Value: The bank's partners are worth 100-200 points, concentrated in Wealth (all are Filthy Rich), Status, and other social advantages; IQ or relevant Talents; and an assortment of business skills. They're sufficiently similar that they might be taken as a group of Allies, though one useful only in socially oriented adventures. Clerks can be plausibly built on 25 points or less.

Social Attributes

Type: Commercial
CR: 4 **Loyalty:** Neutral (12; +2)
Rank: Merchant Rank 0-2 [2/level]
Income Range: $760 (Average) to $406,000 (Multimillionaire 1)
Reputation: +3 (as wealthy and reliable, among merchants and bankers); -2 (as usurers, among moralists)

Notes

Cosimo's pay is an outlier. The other partners average about $26,000.

In 1450, the bank is at or near its height in terms of size and financial health. In addition to the "home office" in Florence, it has branches in several other cities. Those outside Florence are run by local partners, who are paid with a share of profits proportional to their investment in the firm. About two-thirds of the profits go to Cosimo, often through intermediaries in order to hide his real wealth and power.

As is typical for almost any pre-modern organization shy of an imperial government or the Catholic church, the Medici bank – despite being an immensely wealthy organization with international reach – employs very few people. Each branch is operated by one or two local partners, who in turn employ a few clerks. Bank facilities are likewise understated. With so few employees, and business dealings with a necessarily select clientele, each branch typically operates out of a single office furnished with a table (traditionally covered with a green cloth) on which business is transacted, a strongbox for money and confidential documents, and writing desks and an abacus for the clerks. Even Cosimo, despite his immense wealth and lavish patronage of the arts, casts himself as a common man for political purposes, and so transacts business in a far less opulent fashion than he might otherwise.

The Organization of Doctor Joachim Zynfami, 1960

Lurking in the shadows cast by the giants of the Cold War are a number of small, secret organizations: information brokerages run by nonaligned nations, criminal syndicates who don't care if their customers are communist or capitalist as long as their money is good, and a few devious groups manipulating the major players to their own ends. One such group is the organization of Dr. Joachim Zynfami.

Zynfami's legitimate front is a controlling interest in an international business group with facilities through the South Pacific and into Southeast Asia. The group, Neuguinea-Agrarindustriekonzern GmbH, owns plantations (mostly sugar and rice), chemical refineries, and several light industrial facilities. But it masks a number of illegal activities such as gunrunning and drug smuggling, which in turn hide an espionage network which sells secrets to the highest bidder, as well as scientific research facilities working toward powerful, exotic weapons – all with the ultimate goal of planetary domination.

Zynfami will sell to anyone with ready cash, but his preferred customers are those who will cause the most political instability, such as violent criminal organizations, ideological true believers who intend to impose radical changes on their societies, and groups with regional rather than local ambitions. Such factions may be recipients of his experimental weapons: microwave death rays, armor-piercing gyrojets, pocket-sized radio and radar jammers, and so on.

Cosimo de Medici

For much of the 15th century, the Medicis aren't just the richest family in Europe, but also the most powerful never to hold office. Cosimo's wealth has bought him immense influence – in 1450, he's Florence's ruler in all but name. Despite preserving the appearance of a republic and presenting an image of himself as a friendly man of the people, nothing important happens in Florence without his letting it happen. Unfortunately for him, he's also afflicted with severe gout and sometimes has to be carried from place to place in a sedan chair.

The Organization of Dr. Zynfami (Neuguinea-Agrarindustriekonzern GmbH)

Mission Statement: Zynfami's organization looks to spread violent chaos using cutting-edge science while hiding behind a mundane façade. Its outer circles operate by unremarkable business procedures, but the closer one gets to the center of power, the more Zynfami governs with an iron fist.

Capabilities

TL: 7 **Members:** 6,000
Wealth: Comfortable
Contacts: Criminal skills-15 [10]; Engineering skills-18 [15]
Member Traits: Gadgeteer [25]; Hidden Facilities [5]; Secret [-20]; Zeroed [10]
Notable Resources: Zynfami controls a few dozen small-but-scattered plantations, seven small industrial complexes, about as many warehouses, and one well-hidden secret base built into an extinct volcano.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +2. Layers of secrecy increase the modifier for requests for mundane illegal activity (e.g., arranging a drug shipment from a known contact in the organization) to +4. Requesting something involving one of Dr. Zynfami's inventions increases it to +6.

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $438,480,000
Resource Value: $2,192,400
Patron Value: 15 points
Enemy Value: -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: The group can supply 0- to 50-point thugs as Dependents or members of groups of Allies. Dr. Zynfami is worth *at least* 200 points, and he doubtless has an exotic bodyguard or two worth something in between.

Social Attributes

Type: Commercial, Criminal, Research
CR: 4 **Loyalty:** Good (14; +3)
Rank: Organized Crime Rank 0-5 [2/level]
Income Range: $1,000 (Struggling) to $45,000 (Very Wealthy)
Reputation: None (the criminal part of the organization is unknown and the legitimate part is unremarkable)

Notes

The organization is largely legitimate. Probably two-thirds of the company's employees, working in facilities suitable to an organization with a Wealth of Struggling or Average, have no idea that anything shady is going on. More than half of the remainder are aware of and participate in at least moderately illegal activities (e.g., drug smuggling) but don't know how high up the ladder it goes. Only a few hundred members of the group are aware of and involved in Dr. Zynfami's superscience plots. Most of his employees are native to the organization's South Seas homeland, but he employs an international array of consultants.

While Zynfami is raking in the cash in the short term, his long-term plan is to keep Third World nations unstable and relations between the superpowers uneasy so that he can slowly insert his own favorites into positions of power. He dreams of a shadowy empire controlling supplies of oil and other strategic materials, starving the more-developed nations into submission.

At the moment, Zynfami's operation is still largely hidden. Some of his illegal enterprises are known, but law-enforcement and intelligence agencies have no reason to link them together or to his company, much less to Zynfami himself. There are any number of threads which might lead agents up a chain from low-level smuggling to use of Neuguinea-Agrarindustriekonzern's facilities to Zynfami's secret base hidden in a volcanic island in the western Pacific. However, it'll be a tough slog. Zynfami keeps his employees alternately ignorant, well-paid, or terrified.

Provisional IRA, c. 1980

"Irish Republican Army" is a name used by a number of groups pursuing Irish independence. In 1919, the name was applied to an army formed by the union of several militant groups under the authority of a parliament made up of elected Irish MPs who rejected British rule. After a horrific war for independence, a treaty established a divided Ireland, with the south under home rule and some counties in the north still part of the United Kingdom. The Irish were split over acceptance of the treaty, and the IRA itself fractured into a pro-treaty faction, which became the Republic of Ireland's official military, and an anti-treaty faction, which refused to recognize the new republic and held out for a united Ireland.

The bloody revolt against the U.K. became a bloody civil war, which the pro-treaty faction won. But the anti-treaty faction, continuing to use the Irish Republican Army name, survived as a nationalist political and paramilitary organization carrying out acts of resistance against both the Irish government and the British in Northern Ireland. In the 1960s, the IRA became preoccupied with its own internal ideological struggles and split into a class-minded Marxist faction, which was disinclined to become involved in sectarian violence in the north, and a more traditionally nationalist one, which wanted to side with Catholics against Protestants. Both factions regarded themselves as the legitimate IRA, but in time took on or were given different names. The nationalist faction, which quickly became larger and more active, came to be known as the Provisional IRA, or more casually the "Provos."

The Secret Origin of Dr. Zynfami

Joachim Zynfami was born to a wealthy-but-eccentric Italian father and sickly Austrian mother in the Italian concession in Tianjin, China, in 1904. Joachim was just a bit too young to join the military before the end of the WWI. Instead, his introduction to Europe was in its aftermath, when he was sent to university at the Sorbonne. He spent the 1920s immersed in academic life, studying under some of Europe's finest scholars in Paris and later in Heidelberg, and obtaining two doctorates and a few dueling scars. Returning to the Pacific Rim as the Nazis came to power, he joined his father's company (taking over in 1938) and mostly managed to stay one step ahead of the twin disasters of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Neuguinea-Agrarindustriekonzern already had a number of morally and legally dubious connections (for example, bribery of Chinese warlords was business as usual), and Joachim pursued these without qualms, moving into lucrative-but-illegal new enterprises.

Zynfami is tall, with an average build and a slight limp, the result of an industrial accident 10 years ago. He has dark hair with a few threads of gray, heavy eyebrows, a prominent nose, and a mustache and goatee he wears to conceal an unfortunate resemblance to actor Boris Karloff. In addition to broad knowledge of the sciences and engineering, he's a connoisseur of the arts, with a particular interest in the relics of fallen civilizations: Shang bronzes, Greek statues, Aztec calendars, and the like. He's notably even-tempered, ordering dinner and executions in the same tone of voice, sometimes even in the same sentence.

For an organization of modest size, the Provisional IRA has a remarkably complex structure. In theory, a 12-member Executive Council is elected by a convention open to the whole IRA membership, but such conventions are exceptionally rare, as the group has been outlawed during most of its existence and cannot easily organize large meetings. The Executive Council selects the seven-member Army Council, which runs the IRA's day-to-day activities. It also selects a Chief of Staff, the IRA's highest-ranking individual, who in turn chooses a number of department heads.

By 1980, the IRA is organized into a loose structure of cells, in response to increasing police scrutiny and brutality. Rank-and-file members are organized into local companies, which are part of battalions, which are often but not always attached to regional brigades under the command of the Army Council. They are generally charged with support tasks such as surveillance and logistics. Operations (that is, bombings and killings) are mostly carried out by small Active Service Units, cells of five to eight committed members who are commanded at the battalion level or above.

Without a formal procurement process, the IRA necessarily uses a variety of weapons, but their primary arms are the AR-15 and AR-18 rifles, a great many of which were imported in the 1970s. The group's bombing tactics and techniques have become quite sophisticated. For example, they've started setting multiple bombs in some locations: the first creates casualties and attracts the attention of the authorities, while a second is carefully prepositioned in the likely location of a command post set up to investigate the initial bomb, taking out more troops and police, including officers and counterterrorism experts.

Provisional IRA ("Provos")

Mission Statement: The organization is dedicated to making Northern Ireland impossible for the British to govern. Its tools are violence and deliberately spreading terror. Though specialists in these areas are controlled at a fairly high level, the IRA's distributed structure and democratic roots don't rule out local wildcat operations.

Capabilities

TL: 8 **Members:** 1,000
Wealth: Struggling
Contacts: Criminal skills-12 [5]; Military skills-15 [10]
Member Traits: Secret [-10]
Notable Resources: None
Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $16,380,000
Resource Value: $81,900
Patron Value: 10 points
Enemy Value: -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: Due to the IRA's cell structure, groups of Allies (or Dependents) with more than 10 people – up to 75 points each for the ASUs, a bit less for the regular brigades – are unlikely.

Social Attributes

Type: Criminal, Military
CR: 2 **Loyalty:** Very Good (16; +4)
Rank: Insurgent Rank 0-5 [2/level]
Income Range: $1,300 (Struggling)
Reputation: +3 (as freedom fighters, among Irish nationalists); -3 (as terrorists, among the British).

Notes

Members of the IRA are generally very dedicated. Many qualify for Fanaticism to the cause of Irish independence (though not necessarily devotion to the IRA proper), or at least for Intolerance of the British.

They also call in bomb threats shortly before explosions in civilian areas, minimizing civilian casualties (a significant consideration in their propaganda war) but keeping tension high. They've been known to make hoax calls, to much the same effect. As well, they've recently started using homemade mortars effectively.

The bulk of the IRA's membership is concentrated in Northern Ireland, where it carries on a long struggle against the British. The IRA's strategy is to make continued rule of Northern Ireland as unpalatable as possible. This involves assassination of British police and army personnel as well as Irish sympathizers to make the north more difficult to govern and to turn British popular opinion against a continued presence. Combined with this, they carry out bombings to make long-term investment in Ireland unappealing. Their most notable recent success is the assassination of Lord Louis Mountbatten, last Viceroy of India and uncle of Prince Philip, with a radio-controlled bomb on a boat in which he was on a fishing holiday, on the same day a set of roadside bombs killed 16 British troops. Though the Provos have undertaken operations in Great Britain, their activity is concentrated in Ireland; most of the bombs set off elsewhere in support of Irish independence through the late '70s were placed by other groups. However, the "mainland campaign" may ramp up again in the near future.

The IRA has shown some willingness to call ceasefires and negotiate with the British, but only on the precondition that the talks be aimed at the withdrawal of the U.K. from Ireland. London is unwilling to make this concession, so peace talks remain elusive. The IRA has many goals in common with the political party Sinn Féin, but they are ultimately separate organizations.

The Mid-City Defenders

In the 1920s, Midland City, a small city in the American heartland, was plagued by crime and corruption – but help was on the way! The first masked adventurer to take on the many threats to civic life was the mysterious Dusk, who exposed cops and politicians on the take. Not long thereafter, the Terra-Cotta Warrior awoke at the Midland City Museum and took on street criminals of all kinds. In 1938, several of the city's resident superheroes organized themselves into the Mid-City Defenders.

Dozens of superheroes have been in and out of the group since its inception. It went on hiatus several times, though never for more than two years at a stretch, and briefly split into "east side" and "west side" divisions in the late 1980s. However, there have been some constants or near-constants over the years: The Terra-Cotta Warrior has been a member in nearly all incarnations, and remains the heart of the group. The team's long-term leader, the apparently ageless Queen of Diamonds, has been with the Defenders (with a few brief interruptions) since 1958. And the individual currently using the Dusk persona is believed to be the fifth or sixth member of the Defenders to do so.

The Defenders have always been a small group and have never numbered more than 16 (or slightly more, depending on how one counts the self-replicating hero Multiple Mary in the '90s), and its members have a tendency towards eccentricity, so they've never had a particularly rigid structure.

Mid-City Defenders

Mission Statement: The Defenders work to protect the safety of everyone in Midland City. This mostly takes the form of crime-fighting (violent crime takes priority), but also applies to natural disasters. The group's nominal leader relies on charisma and interpersonal relationships to build consensus.

Capabilities

TL: 8^ **Members:** 10
Wealth: Wealthy
Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Area Knowledge (Midland City)-18 [3]; Crime-fighting skills-15 [10]; Technological skills-15 [10]
Member Traits: Legal Enforcement Powers [5]; Unusual Background (Occasional access to TL^ gear) [10]
Notable Resources: The group's headquarters is a retired Art Deco railway terminal a few blocks from City Hall. It contains living quarters for members who need them, laboratories, workshops, a hangar capable of housing a large VTOL aircraft, a private museum commemorating the Defenders' exploits, and a spectacular central chamber used for meetings, ceremonies, and coordinating the team's activities during crises. The structure has been reinforced and enhanced over the years to make it more secure, defensible and even, in places, self-repairing.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +1. As what is essentially an emergency service, the Defenders respond quickly to catastrophes (at least -5).

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $2,168,400 **Resource Value:** $10,842
Patron Value: 20 points **Enemy Value:** -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: The Defenders are too diverse to constitute a homogeneous group of Allies. Individual members range from around 200 points to over 1,000. The al-Shams (p. 26) are unremarkable normals who could be Dependents for adventurers.

Social Attributes

Type: Enforcement, Investigation
CR: 1 **Loyalty:** Very Good (16; +3)
Rank: Superhero Rank 0-1 [1/level]
Income Range: $2,600 (Average)
Reputation: +3 (among residents of Midland City)

Notes

The group is essentially TL8, but with sporadic access to superscience and magical gear. While the Defenders don't offer formal salaries, they can support those members who need it in order to fight crime full-time.

Cavalcade: Your giant robot's flattening the electric gorilla tanks, but the power plant is generating too much heat! You'll have to pull it back!

The Gear: Heat dissipates, son; damage doesn't!

*– **Mid-City Defenders** #2/187 (October 2002)*

There are annual elections for team leader, and much-hated monthly assemblies to discuss business and membership (candidates are nominated by any active member and accepted by majority vote; members may be expelled by a supermajority), but meetings can be called at any time by the leader or a majority of members. Many routine matters are delegated to the leader or a business manager, however. The group offers no formal training programs, though members often instruct one another in fields of mutual interest; for example, Dusk usually makes sure that new teammates have at least minimal hand-to-hand combat skills.

The Defenders have quasi-official status, empowering them to apprehend criminals without being members of a formally constituted police force. A general unwillingness by the police to investigate potentially illegal searches or possession of lethal weapons (a prickly task, since some members of the Defenders *are* lethal weapons) is described as "professional courtesy." Despite controversies in public about such events as the Vietnam War, the Defenders have traditionally concentrated on fighting crime, keeping themselves out of politics. Moreover, decades of deep involvement in promoting civic life (everything from dedicating parks and schools to Link Girl's stunningly effective efforts as a mediator) and defense of Midland City against super-powered threats – such as Doctor Devil's flame minions, the Ooze's stranglehold on the city's utilities, and the electric gorilla invasion of '02 – have kept the Defenders very popular.

Current Defenders

At the moment, the Defenders comprise eight super-powered or super-normal individuals:

Cavalcade: A nervous speedster, still mastering his powers.

Dusk: A mysterious investigator and martial artist with a long history.

Face: A shapeshifter who can adopt the form of any person, but only for an hour at a time.

The Gear: A reclusive millionaire and technological genius who usually operates robots from her control station at headquarters or her mansion outside of town.

Link Girl: A low-powered telepath with the jumbled partial memories of hundreds of people she's linked minds with.

Major Sky: A near-invulnerable flyer.

The Queen of Diamonds: A superhero who creates blasting rays and force fields from light.

The Terra-Cotta Warrior: A clay statue animated by the spirit of an ancient warrior.

The Defenders also employ Amira al-Shams, a lawyer, as their business manager, and her husband Ibrahim, a former deli owner, as general caretaker for the facility.

Médecins Sans Frontières, c. 2014

Médecins Sans Frontières – known in the English-speaking world as Doctors Without Borders – is a charitable organization which provides emergency medical assistance to global crisis points, responding to natural disasters, wars, and the like. It grew out of a group of mostly French doctors who had a history of working with the International Red Cross but saw the need for an organization focused specifically on medical aid instead of spreading efforts across medical care, shelter, relocation, and other relief tasks. It was founded in 1971 with 300 volunteers, mostly medical professionals and journalists, responding to the public-health disasters arising from the failed secession of Biafra from Nigeria.

After some growing pains and internal problems (several of the founders left to form yet another group, Doctors of the World), MSF has grown to over 30,000 members, including both paid employees and volunteers. The vast majority of field workers come from countries where MSF works, with international specialists coming in as necessary. MSF is composed of 24 legally separate affiliates. Most of these are associated with a single nation (e.g., Canada, Japan, and the United States), but a few are regional (e.g., South Asia and East Africa).

Over time, MSF's mission has expanded from providing emergency medical care and epidemic containment to include longer-term public-health concerns such as mental health and trauma counseling, nutrition and clean water programs, and vaccinations.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)

Mission Statement: MSF provides medical care in response to humanitarian disasters wherever necessary, usually in Third World nations. It operates in part by building and maintaining consensus, so the leadership is unlikely to take actions which the membership doesn't largely believe in.

Capabilities

TL: 8 **Members:** 30,000
Wealth: Struggling
Contacts: Administration-18 [3]; Current Affairs (Disasters)-15 [2]; Diplomacy-15 [2]; Medical skills-15 [10]
Member Traits: None
Notable Resources: MSF has administrative offices for each of its divisions and operates numerous temporary facilities in the field. It also maintains several warehouses of medical supplies near airports, notably just outside Brussels and Paris.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +2. The organization reacts relatively quickly to emerging disasters, but its distributed structure makes it somewhat slower (+5) to react to challenges to policy.

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $547,560,000 **Resource Value:** $2,737,800
Patron Value: 10 points **Enemy Value:** -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: Many of MSF's members are trained medical practitioners or emergency workers, so they may have slightly higher than average point values.

Social Attributes

Type: Aid
CR: 2 **Loyalty:** Good (13; +2)
Rank: Administrative Rank 0-6 [2/level]
Income Range: $1,500 (Struggling) to $4,500 (Comfortable)
Reputation: +1 (as a charitable organization, most of the time)

Notes

Many members of the group have a Sense of Duty, Code of Honor, or similar trait which pushes them towards undertaking their risky avocation. While MSF has a nominal value as an Enemy of -30 points, it is almost inconceivable that it would be anything other than a Watcher or Rival.

Workers on assignment may be called on to perform a variety of tasks, from staffing hospitals in host countries to setting up field clinics for refugees to providing healthcare education and equipment – usually under difficult conditions. While the group provides training and security protocols to personnel, and will shut down operations if a situation becomes too dangerous, it nevertheless cannot keep its members completely safe from kidnapping and violence. Likewise, while MSF carries a certain amount of international respect, it doesn't provide diplomatic immunity, so its people are subject to the whims of local law enforcement. The parent organizations supply legal and logistical support (e.g., prepacked surgical or other specialized medical kits which can be deployed quickly) so that doctors on the ground have both the materials and permission to go about their work. MSF is also responsible for a bit of medical research; it's affiliated with the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (a group developing treatments for a number of underserved diseases such as malaria and sleeping sickness) and Epicentre (an organization doing research on epidemiology in developing nations).

MSF has received praise for limiting the contributions it will accept. It declines those from a number of businesses where it sees a conflict of interest, including weapons manufacturers, gas and oil companies, and some producers of medical equipment. It also limits the amount of money it has on hand, to keep its focus on relief operations instead of on managing its funding. For example, after the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the organization stopped all fundraising and refused to accept further donations when it reached what it felt would be an adequate level of funding to see it through its work.

Though primarily a humanitarian relief organization whose charter proposes a politically neutral stance, the group doesn't shy away from politically sensitive topics. One of the items in its charter is an obligation to bear witness to the conditions which have led to its involvement – a legacy of the journalists who helped found MSF. It has also sometimes taken overt political positions when its leadership has concluded that political change is a necessary condition for improving public health. For example, in 1984, MSF was expelled from Ethiopia for criticizing the government, and in 1994, it called for military intervention in Rwanda. But despite its occasional controversial stances, MSF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

The principles of impartiality and neutrality are not synonymous with silence.

– MSF Charter

Biotech Euphrates, c. 2100

Biotech Euphrates is one of the most prominent transnational corporations of the early 22nd century. After 80 years on the cutting edge of genetic engineering, it dabbles in almost every field of biotechnology and is a leader in most. The company is immensely wealthy and employs a huge number of workers by the standards of its day, though that makes it merely "fairly large" relative to firms a century earlier.

Biotech Euphrates

Mission Statement: Biotech Euphrates is committed to retaining a leading position in the biotechnology market – in terms of both sales and technological sophistication – by any legal means. Structurally, the organization has come a long way from being the brainchild of an eccentric plutocrat. A complicated board of directors delegates power to local administrators, who are given varying degrees of independence proportionate to their perceived importance to the company's future.

Capabilities

TL: 10/11 **Members:** 200,000
Wealth: Very Wealthy
Contacts: Bioengineering-21 [4]; Business skills-15 [10]
Member Traits: None
Notable Resources: In addition to its semi-ceremonial "headquarters" in Istanbul, Biotech Euphrates has dozens of facilities ranging from warehouses to office buildings to research vessels to small, rented orbital habitats. Many are staffed by a few tens of employees; only a minority are large enough to contain more than a few hundred.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +3

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $306,432,000,000
Resource Value: $1,532,160,000
Patron Value: 40 points
Enemy Value: -40 points
Ally and Dependent Value: Biotech Euphrates can provide a wide range of NPCs associates, from low-level (and low-point-value) technicians and clerical workers who are suitable for large groups, to high-point-value senior executives who qualify as individual Allies.

Social Attributes

Type: Commercial, Research
CR: 2
Loyalty: Neutral (11; +1)
Rank: Business Rank 0-8 [3/level]
Income Range: $2,400 (Comfortable in an Average area, 10-hour week) to $30,000,000 (Multimillionaire 2 in a Wealthy area, 15-hour week)
Reputation: -2 (among sapient-rights activists); +1 (for quality products, among biotech buyers)

Notes

The world of ***Transhuman Space*** is generally TL10 (and Biotech Euphrates' costs are calculated on that basis), but biotechnology is at TL11. Biotech Euphrates makes use of intelligences in every form – human, bioroid, all flavors of AI, and so on – as allowed by the jurisdictions in which it operates.

Biotech Euphrates began in the opening decades of the 21st century as an offshore company – quite literally! Its founder put a pioneering spin on the idea of seasteading by using a retired oil tanker as a mobile research facility beyond the reach of national regulation. Early releases included consumer and industrial/agricultural products, such as the first K-10s and a variety of engineered crops producing increased yields or growing on marginal land. By the middle of the century, however, Biotech Euphrates was selling the first reliable, standardized genetic-upgrade patterns for humans. This was followed in the 2060s by the introduction of bioroids.

The decentralization of the 22nd century has rendered the idea of a single corporate head office a bit quaint, but Biotech Euphrates maintains a near-ceremonial headquarters facility on the European side of Istanbul, overlooking the Bosporus, on a site secured by Melik Evrim near the end of his fabulously successful career. While some administrative work is done there, it serves more as a company museum, a site for physical meetings, and a public showroom for various technologies. Most of Biotech Euphrates' operations, including management, are currently in or near Earth orbit. This arrangement keeps its facilities and personnel close to the bulk of humanity and Earth's massive networks – giving it access to talent and rapid communications – and also puts a lot of resources in close proximity to the company's largest ongoing project: the regrowth of Luna City. Earth-side facilities are generally sales offices, research stations geared towards Earth's environment, or part of the firm's supply chain. There's a similar mix of facilities elsewhere in the system: labs and factories geared to the specific environment (Mars, the asteroids, etc.), and offices handling locally sourced materials and local sales.

Biotech Euphrates continues to operate primarily in lightly regulated jurisdictions. This has kept it largely out of legal trouble but has created ethical issues galore. Notably, the company faces ongoing criticism for its invention of bioroids and for aspects of its ongoing participation in the field. It has avoided significant legal action so far, but it's at the heart of controversies over the often slave-like state of bioroids and generally poor treatment of workers in regions without strong legal protection.

More human than human.
– Tyrell Corporation motto, from ***Blade Runner***

Raiders of the Black Void

When crosstime authorities think of the Cabal, they imagine groups like the Lodge of the Midwinter Aton and the Sons of Imhotep. In these considerations, the Raiders of the Black Void are a footnote at best. Indeed, they seem to be a footnote to other members of the Cabal, who regard them as dimension-hopping wannabes, the annoying kid brother of dark interdimensional conspiracies. The Raiders are more tightly organized than other lodges, acting as a single body under most circumstances, but are much less powerful and lack notable allies.

The code is more what you call guidelines than actual rules.

– Barbarosa, in ***Pirates of the Caribbean***

The Raiders are a brotherhood (or siblinghood, as they happily accept all genders) of world-jumpers with pretensions to cosmic understanding – but as a practical matter, they're focused on piracy. Though they retain some of the cabalistic (that is, derived from the *kabbalah* and similar sources) jargon of other Cabalists, their cosmology and terminology are a mishmash of thousands of sources including aspects of Hinduism, Taoism, Rastafari, New Age psychology, any number of pop songs, movies, and TV shows, and their crosstime variants. Their ceremonies change with their current influences and are largely improvised. They make a pretense of searching for wisdom in the contemplation of notable objects, which invariably include jewels and fine arts and crafts. They also embrace technological items of all sorts; the Raiders show much greater interest in mundane technologies than their more-formidable counterparts, perhaps to counterbalance their lack of mystical power. They raid for these, typically using slightly higher technology than the target's ambient TL, so that they have an advantage but not one that will get them noticed.

Raiders are recruited from the outcasts of many worlds: fugitives, the mentally infirm, and so on. Their individual skill levels are rarely impressive, but they do provide a lot of coverage, from handling single-masted sailing ships to casting spells to repairing damaged cybernetics. New Raiders obtain their power through a regimen of physically and psychologically scarring surgery combined with training in complex rituals. In groups of as small as nine, they can jump between worlds; with increasing numbers, they can carry more and more material with them.

Their base isn't actually hidden, but as it's on an otherwise uninhabited parallel (on the site of Rabat, Morocco, as it happens), it's unlikely to attract attention. The Raiders have been accumulating loot for centuries, and building and rebuilding their small settlement for nearly as long. It has a weirdly run-down look, with a string of increasingly decayed ruins leading away from it built over centuries of low-intensity occupation, punctuated by the crumbling hulks of sailing ships, 18-wheelers, cargo airships, and other vehicles they've hijacked, as well as the remains of small, hand-built temples in a dozen styles.

Raiders of the Black Void

Mission Statement: This permanent, floating band of pirates has three priorities: looting with smash-and-grab raids, loyalty to one's brethren, and enjoying the fruits of successful forays – in that order, albeit wrapped up in mystical mumbo-jumbo. Leadership is charismatic, with popular and influential pirates rising to the top.

Capabilities

TL: 10^ **Members:** 129
Wealth: Average
Contacts: Criminal skills-12 [5]; Hidden Lore (Cabal)-12 [1]; Technological skills-12 [5]
Member Traits: Jumper (World) [100]; Supernatural Features (Glowing Scars) [-5]
Notable Resources: The Raiders' base is a ramshackle mix of improvised and temporary buildings. It doesn't look like much, but the twisting alleys are easy to get lost (and ambushed) in if you don't know your way around, and the settlement contains a plethora of functional (or nearly so) vehicles covering a wide range of TLs.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +1

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $17,857,728 **Resource Value:** $89,289
Patron Value: 10 points **Enemy Value:** -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: The Raiders are sufficiently similar in value that they can serve as a group of Allies. However, given their world-jumping ability, they *start* at around 100 points, making them very expensive Allies in most campaigns.

Social Attributes

Type: Criminal, Occult
CR: 2 **Loyalty:** Good (13; +2)
Rank: Pirate Rank 0-2 [2/level]
Income Range: $5,000 to $8,000 (Average)
Reputation: -1 (among Cabalists)

Notes

Raiders have a strong sense of mutual loyalty, usually in the form of a Code of Honor or Sense of Duty.

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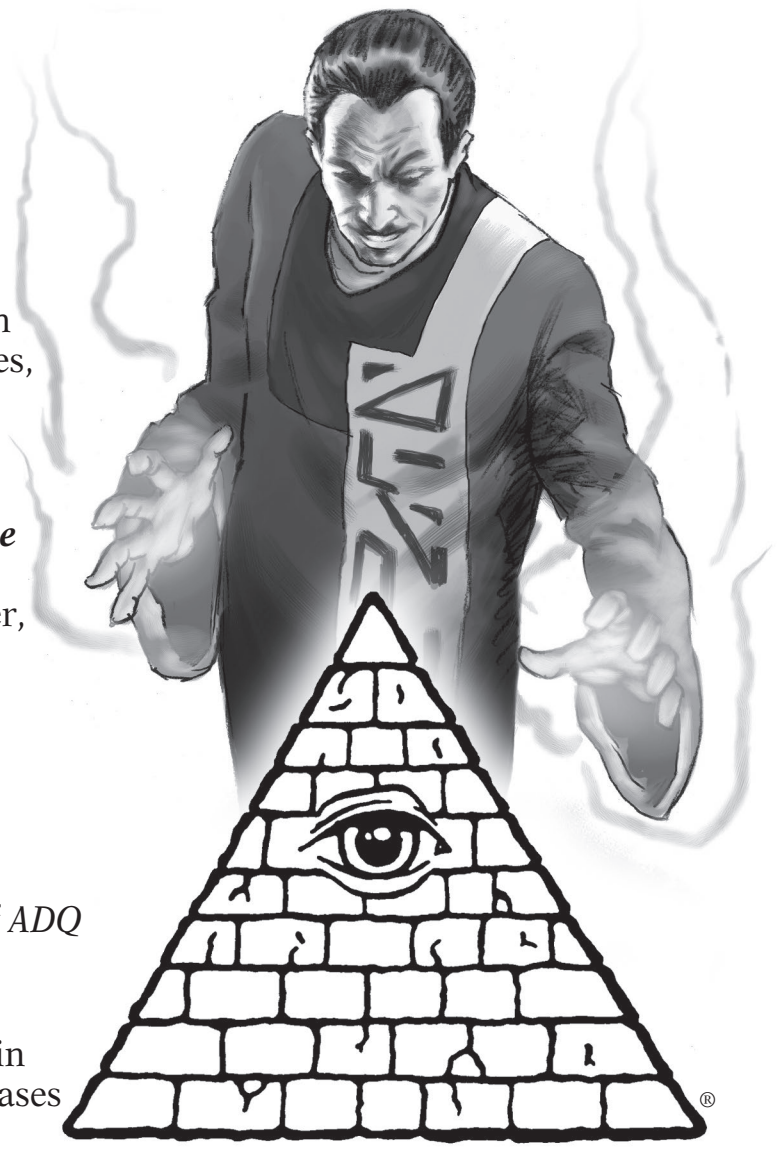

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